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1862.]

THE

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF THE REVEREND AND PIOUS

JAMES M'GREADY,

LATE

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN HENDERSON, KY.

"By it, he, being dead, yet speaketh."

EDITED BY THE REVEREND JAMES SMITH.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

Nashville, Tenn.

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1837.

District of West Tennessee, to-wit:

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the 13th day of February, in the fifty seventh year of the Independence of the United States of Amerien, and in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-three, JAMES SMITH, of said district, deposited in this office, the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as Editor and Proprietor, in the words following, to-wit.

"The posthumous works of the reverend and pious James McGready, late minister of the gospel, in Henderson, Kentucky. Edited by the Reverend James Smith. 'By it, he, being dead, yet speaketh.' Two volumes in one."

In conformity to an act of Congress of the United States, entitled "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned," and also, to an "Act, entitled an act supplementary to an act entitled an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefit thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints."

[U. S.]

N. A. McNAIRY, Clerk.

PREFACE.

It happens, too frequently, that the benefit of the intellectual labors of great and good men is almost lost to the world, either from too great diffidence of the individuals themselves or from the carelessness of those into whose hands their productions fall after their decease. And such had nearly been the fate of the discourses comprising this volume, with many others of equal value by the same author. The Editor, therefore, trusts that he renders good service to the great cause in which their author labored, by rescuing from oblivion a part of the sermons of the venerated M'Gready; and, he confidently hopes, that this belief will be fully sanctioned by the Christian community.

To a large number of persons, now resident in the valley of the Mississippi, where the author principally labored in the ministry, it is expected that these sermons will be peculiarly acceptable, inasmuch as it will be recollected by thousands now living, that he was one of the most efficient instruments, in the hands of the great Head of the church, in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom through the vast western wilderness. He was an eminent revivalist, and particularly identified in what has been termed the great revival of 1800, which began and was, in a great measure, carried on through his instrumentality. It is not improbable, therefore, that many of the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ will recognize in one or another of these discourses the very arrow which pierced their hearts, and to which, under heaven, they are indebted for their salvation.

Most of the sermons, in this volume were preached by the Author during the revival mentioned, although some of them were slightly altered by him, at a subsequent period, as may be observed from an allusion to natural events of a later date in that one entitled "*The Character, History and End of the Fool.*" As none of them were designed for publication, but simply for the Author's own use, it will be remarked that little attention has been paid by him to the mere ornament of expression. Yet the intelligent Christian reader will readily perceive that all his discourses are well calculated to convince the unregenerate of the evil nature of sin, and the awful consequences of living and dying under its dominion; to lead the heavy laden to the blood of sprinkling, and to administer encouragement and consolation to

the hearts of God's people, the Lord Jesus Christ being the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the soul and substance of the whole.

Many of the sermons, even to the ordinary reader, will seem to close abruptly, owing to an omission of the author in writing out the applications—that being a part he almost uniformly delivered extemporaneously, and according to the circumstances of his audience. This omission is the more to be lamented as in his applications he is said to have been particularly interesting, forcing the truth home upon the consciences of his hearers with almost irresistible efficacy. The reader may infer something of his powers in this way, from the sermon "*On the superabounding Grace of God.*"

That these sermons may prove edifying and encouraging to the Christian reader—that they may be instrumental in bringing many souls to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that, thereby, much fruit may abound to the author at the great day of the Lord—such are the sincere prayers of the reader's obedient servant,

THE EDITOR.

SKETCH OF THE CHARACTER
OF THE
REVEREND JAMES M'GREADY,
BY THE REV. JOHN ANDREWS.

FROM the conduct and conversation of Mr. M'Gready, there is abundant evidence to believe that he was not only a subject of divine grace and unfeigned piety, but that he was favored with great nearness to God and intimate communion with him. Like Enoch, he walked with God; like Jacob, he wrestled with God, by fervent persevering supplications, for a blessing on himself and others and prevailed; like Elijah, he was very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, and regarded his glory and the advancement of his kingdom as the great end of his existence on earth, to which all other designs ought to be subordinate; like Job, he deeply abhorred himself, repenting, as it were, in dust and ashes, when he was enabled to behold the purity of God and his own disconformity to his holy nature; like the apostle Paul, he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, his Lord; and, like him, he felt great delight in preaching to his fellow men the unsearchable riches of Christ. He was remarkably plain in his dress and manners; but very familiar, communicative, and interesting in his conversation. He possessed sound understanding, and a moderate share of human learning. The style of his sermons was not polished, but perspicuous and pointed; and his manner of address was unusually solemn and impressive. As a preacher he was highly esteemed by the humble followers of the Lamb, who relished the precious truths which he clearly exhibited to their view; but he was hated, and sometimes bitterly reproached and persecuted, not only by the openly vicious and profane, but by many nominal Christians, or formal professors, who could not bear his heart-searching and penetrating addresses, and the indignity against the ungodly, which, as a son of thunder, he clearly presented to the view of their guilty minds from the awful denunciations of the Word of Truth. Although he did not fail to preach Jesus Christ, and him crucified, to laboring and heavy laden sinners, and to administer consolation which the gospel speaks to humble believers; yet he was more distinguished by a talent for depicting the guilty and deplorable situation of impenitent sinners, and the awful consequences of their rebellion a-

against God, without speedy repentance unto life and a living faith in the blood of sprinkling. There is reason to believe that his faithful and indefatigable labors in the gospel of Christ were crowned with a great degree of success, and that he was honored as an instrument in the conviction and conversion of many sinners, and more especially in the commencement and progress of several powerful revivals of religion, in different places, during which he labored with distinguished zeal and activity.

We shall conclude our remarks by observing, that some of the traits in Mr. M'Gready's character as a private Christian, which are worthy of our imitation, were his fervent piety, his unaffected humility, his earnest, persevering supplications at the Throne of Grace, his resignation to the will of God under the afflictions, bereavements and poverty with which he was tried in this world, his cheerful reliance on God's kind and watchful providence and confidence in his great and precious promises, and his contempt of the pomp and vanities of this world, to which he seemed to be, in a great degree, crucified. And, as a minister of the gospel, he ought to be imitated in his regard to the honor of God and the salvation of souls, his vigorous and zealous exertions to promote these grand objects, his fidelity in declaring the whole counsel of God, and his patience in bearing the revilings of the ungodly.

NOTE.—For further particulars concerning the character of this man of God, the reader is referred to Smith's History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

**NARRATIVE
OF THE
COMMENCEMENT AND PROGRESS
OF THE
REVIVAL OF 1800,**

BY THE LATE REVEREND JAMES M'GREADY,

In a Letter to a Friend, dated "Logan County, Ky., Oct. 23, 1801."

“But I promised to give you a short statement of our blessed revival; on which you will at once say, the Lord has done great things for us in the wilderness, and the solitary place has been made glad: the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose.

“In the month of May, 1797, which was the spring after I came to this country, the Lord graciously visited Gasper River Congregation (an infant church then under my charge.) The doctrines of *Regeneration*, Faith and Repentance, which I uniformly preached, seemed to call the attention of the people to a serious inquiry. During the winter the question was often proposed to me, Is *Religion* a sensible thing? If I were converted would I feel it, and know it? In May, as I said before, the work began.

“A woman, who had been a professor, in full communion with the church, found her old hope false and delusive—she was struck with deep conviction, and in a few days was filled with joy and peace in believing. She immediately visited her friends and relatives, from house to house, and warned them of their danger in a most solemn, faithful manner, and plead with them to repent and seek religion. This, as a mean, was accompanied with the divine blessing to the awakening of many. About this time the ears of all in that congregation seemed to be open to receive the word preached and almost every sermon was accompanied with the power of God, to the awakening of sinners. During the summer, about ten persons in the congregation were brought to Christ. In the fall of the year a general deadness seemed to creep on apace. Conviction and conversion work, in a great measure, ceased; and no visible alteration for the better took place, until the summer of 1798, at the administration of the sacrament of the supper, which was in July. On Monday the Lord graciously poured out his *Spirit*; a very general awakening took place—perhaps but few families in the congregation could be found who, less or more, were not struck with an awful sense of their lost estate. During the week following but

few persons attended to worldly business, their attention to the business of their souls was so great. On the first Sabbath of September, the sacrament was administered at Muddy River (one of my congregations). At this meeting the Lord graciously poured forth his spirit, to the awakening of many careless sinners. Through these two congregations already mentioned, and through Red River, my other congregation, awakening work went on with power under every sermon. The people seemed to hear, as for eternity. In every house, and almost in every company, the whole conversation with people, was about the state of their souls. About this time the Rev. J. B. came here, and found a Mr. R. to join him. In a little time he involved our infant churches in confusion, disputation, &c. opposed the doctrines preached here; ridiculed the whole work of the revival; formed a considerable party, &c. &c. In a few weeks this seemed to have put a final stop to the whole work, and our infant congregation remained in a state of deadness and darkness from the fall, through the winter, and until the month of July, 1799, at the administration of the sacrament at Red River. This was a very solemn time throughout. On Monday, the power of God seemed to fill the congregation; the boldest, daring sinners in the country covered their faces and wept bitterly. After the congregation was dismissed, a large number of people stayed about the doors, unwilling to go away. Some of the ministers proposed to me to collect the people in the meeting house again, and perform prayer with them; accordingly we went in, and joined in prayer and exhortation. The mighty power of God came amongst us like a shower from the everlasting hills—God's people were quickened and comforted; yea, some of them were filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Sinners were powerfully alarmed, and some precious souls were brought to feel the pardoning love of Jesus.

“At Gasper River (at this time under the care of Mr. Rankin, a precious instrument in the hand of God) the sacrament was administered in August. This was one of the days of the son of Man, indeed, especially on Monday. I preached a plain gospel sermon on Heb. 11 and 16. The better country. A great solemnity continued during the sermon. After sermon Mr. Rankin gave a solemn exhortation—the congregation was then dismissed; but the people all kept their seats for a considerable space, whilst awful solemnity appeared in the countenances of a large majority. Presently several persons under deep convictions broke forth into a loud outcry—many fell to the ground lay powerless, groaning, praying and crying for mercy. As I passed through the multitude, a woman, lying in awful distress, called me to her. Said she, “I lived in your congregation in Carolina; I was a professor, and often went to the communion;

but I was deceived; I have no religion; I am going to hell." In another place an old grey headed man lay in an agony of distress, addressing his weeping wife and children in such language as this: "We are all going to hell together; we have lived prayerless, ungodly lives; the work of our souls is yet to begin; we must get religion, or we will all be damned." But time would fail me to mention every instance of this kind.

"At Muddy River the sacrament was administered in September. The power of God was gloriously present on this occasion. The circumstances of it are equal, if not superior to those of Gasper River. Many souls were solemnly awakened; a number, we hope, converted—whilst the people of God feasted on the hidden manna, and, with propriety, might be said to sing the new song. But the year 1800 exceeds all that my eyes ever beheld upon earth. All that I have related is only, as it were, an introduction. Although many souls in these congregations, during the three preceding years, have been savingly converted, and now give living evidences of their union to Christ; yet all that work is only like a few drops before a mighty rain, when compared with the wonders of Almighty Grace, that took place in the year 1800.

"In June, the sacrament was administered at Red River. This was the greatest time we had ever seen before. On Monday multitudes were struck down under awful conviction; the cries of the distressed filled the whole house. There you might see profane swearers, and sabbath-breakers pricked to the heart, and crying out, "what shall we do to be saved?" There frolicers and dancers crying for mercy. There you might see little children of ten, eleven and twelve years of age, praying and crying for redemption, in the blood of Jesus, in agonies of distress. During this sacrament, and until the Tuesday following, ten persons, we believe, were savingly brought home to Christ.

"In July, the sacrament was administered in Gasper River Congregation. Here multitudes crowded from all parts of the country to see a strange work, from the distance of forty, fifty and even a hundred miles; whole families came in their wagons; between twenty and thirty wagons were brought to the place, loaded with people, and their provisions, in order to encamp at the meeting house. On Friday, nothing more appeared during the day, than a decent solemnity. On Saturday, matters continued in the same way, until in the evening. Two pious women were sitting together, conversing about their exercises; which conversation seemed to affect some of the by-standers; instantly the divine flame spread through the whole multitude. Presently you might have seen sinners lying powerless in every part of the house, praying and crying for mercy. Ministers and private Christians were kept busy during the night conversing

with the distressed. This night a goodly number of awakened souls were delivered by sweet believing views of the glory, fulness and sufficiency of Christ, to save to the uttermost. Amongst these were some little children—a striking proof of the religion of Jesus. Of many instances to which I have been an eye-witness, I shall only mention one, viz. a little girl. I stood by her whilst she lay across her mother's lap almost in despair. I was conversing with her when the first gleam of light broke in upon her mind—She started to her feet, and in an ecstacy of joy, she cried out, "O he is willing, he is willing—he is come, he is come—O what a sweet Christ he is—O what a precious Christ he is—O what a fulness I see in him—O what a beauty I see in him—O why was it that I never could believe! that I never could come to Christ before, when Christ was so willing to save me?" Then turning round, she addressed sinners, and told them of the glory, willingness and preciousness of Christ, and plead with them to repent; and all this in language so heavenly, and at the same time, so rational and scriptural, that I was filled with astonishment. But were I to write you every particular of this kind that I have been an eye and ear witness to, during the two past years, it would fill many sheets of paper.

"At this sacrament a great many people from Cumberland, particularly from *Shiloh* Congregation, came with great curiosity to see the work, yet prepossessed with strong prejudices against it; about five of whom, I trust, were savingly and powerfully converted before they left the place. A circumstance worthy of observation, they were sober professors in full communion. It was truly affecting to see them lying powerless, crying for mercy, and speaking to their friends and relations, in such language as this: "O, we despised the work that we heard of in *Logan*; but, O, we were deceived—I have no religion; I know now there is a reality in these things; three days ago I would have despised any person that would have behaved as I am doing now; but, O, I feel the very pains of hell in my soul." This was the language of a precious soul, just before the hour of deliverance came. When they went home, their conversation to their friends and neighbors, was the means of commencing a glorious work that has overspread all the Cumberland settlements to the conversion of hundreds of precious souls. The work continued night and day at this sacrament, whilst the vast multitude continued upon the ground until Tuesday morning. According to the best computation, we believe, that forty-five souls were brought to Christ on this occasion.

"Muddy River Sacrament, in all its circumstances, was equal, and in some respects superior, to that at Gasper River. This sacrament was in August. We believe about fifty persons, at this time, obtained religion.

"At Ridge Sacrament, in Cumberland, the second Sabbath in September, about forty-five souls, we believe, obtained religion. At Shiloh Sacrament, the third Sabbath in September, about seventy persons. At Mr. Craighead's sacrament, in October, about forty persons. At the Clay Lick sacrament, *congregation*, in Logan county, in October, eight persons. At Little Muddy Creek sacrament, in November, about twelve. At Montgomery's Meeting-house, in Cumberland, about forty. At Hopewell sacrament, in Cumberland, in November, about twenty persons. To mention the ~~circumstances~~ instances of more private occasions, common-days preaching, and societies, would swell a letter to a volume.

"The present season has been a blessed season likewise; yet not equal to last year in conversion work. I shall just give you a list of our sacraments, and the number, we believe, experienced religion at each, during the present year, 1801."

[My correspondent here mentions several different sacraments held at different places, and the number that he hopes obtained true religion, at these several solemnities, amounts in all to 144 persons. He then proceeds:—]

"I would just remark that, among the great numbers in our country that professed to obtain religion, I scarcely know an instance of any that gave a comfortable ground of hope to the people of God, that they had religion, and have been admitted to the privileges of the church, that have, in any degree, disgraced their profession, or given us any ground to doubt their religion.

"Were I to mention to you the rapid progress of this work, in vacant congregations, carried on by the means of a few supplies and by praying societies—such as at Stone's River, Cedar Creek, Goose Creek, the Red Banks, the Fountain Head, and many other places—it would be more than time, or the bounds of a letter would admit of. Mr. M'G. and myself administered the sacrament at the Red Banks, on the Ohio, about a month ago—a vacant congregation, nearly a hundred miles distant from any regular organized society, formerly a place famed for wickedness, and a perfect synagogue of Satan. I visited them twice at an early period; Mr. R. twice, and Mr. H. once. These supplies the Lord blessed, as a means to start his work and their praying societies were attended with the power of God, to the conversion of almost whole families. When we administered the sacrament amongst them, they appeared to be the most blessed little society I ever saw. I ordained ten elders among them, all precious Christians; three of which, two years ago were professed deists, now living monuments of Almighty Grace."

The original is signed,

JAMES M'GREADY.

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discovery, for they had thousands of Gods to whom they attributed the basest acts of immorality. Witness the obscene debaucheries of their Jupiter, Apollo and Venus, the tricks and deceptions of Mercury, and the swinish intemperance of Bacchus and his worshippers. Again, view all the nations of the earth in the present day, where the Bible is unknown, and where the Christian religion does not exist, and you will find them in nearly a state of savage barbarity, not only grossly ignorant of the nature and perfections of God, but also of their duty to men, and of the first principles of civil government. This is evident from the state of the Chinese and Turkish empires, the numerous tribes of Tartars, the inhabitants of the vast continent of Africa, and the savage nations of America. Now let reason, the light of nature and common sense, point out any nation or people, who, without any knowledge of the Bible, have acquired from the book of nature any just ideas of the being and perfections of God, or the nature of their duty to God and man. But the Deist replies, there is one true and eternal God, the almighty first cause of all things, and this God is a being of all possible goodness and perfection, possessed of every amiable and moral excellency. I say the same—the Bible says the same—and all Deists have learned this important truth, either directly or indirectly, from the Bible. Their fathers and grandfathers believed in the Bible, and held it in high veneration, and from education they retain some of the truths of the Bible, while they would reject it altogether.

But there is one true and eternal God, who possesses all possible goodness and perfection; in this the Deist and the Christian agree. This God made man a rational creature, capable of distinguishing between good and evil; in this also the Deist and the Christian agree. It must be the will of such a God, that his rational creature, man, should do right, that he should perform certain duties to his God, and certain duties to his fellow-men, and the neglect or non-performance of these duties, must be criminal in the judgment of an all-wise, pure and holy God; this, reason and the light of nature plainly acknowledge, and here also, the Deist and the Christian agree.

If the Supreme, Eternal God be a being of all possible goodness and perfection, and possessed of every amiable and moral excellency, delighting in the happiness of his creatures, then he must originally have created man in his own image, a pure, holy being, free from any propensity to vice and wickedness, and also free from all the natural evils that now encircle him on every side, and render him miserable in every situation of life. Reason and the light of nature suggest that such a God would originally create man in such a condition; and here the Deist and the Christian are agreed.

Again, if a pure and holy God made man such a being as we must rationally suppose such a God would have made him, then man, by some means, has lost his original rectituded and purity; he has become a fallen, depraved creature, prone to vice and wickedness; he has also become a miserable creature, exposed to losses and disappointments, to pains, sorrows, diseases and death. This is a fact so plain and self-evident to the view of reason and the light of nature, that no sensible Deist, who admits the difference between vice and virtue, can possibly deny it; therefore, I conclude, that here the Christian and the Deist are agreed.

Again, if the Sovereign of the Universe be a being of all possible goodness and perfection—if he have made man a rational creature, and placed him under a law—if it be his will that man should do right—and if every evil act be a violation of this law, then every sinful act renders man liable to punishment.—To say that God sees no difference between vice and virtue, or that he considers it a matter of indifference whether his creatures did right or wrong, would be to represent the Deity as the most odious of beings; this is so plain to the view of reason and the light of nature, that I conclude here the Deist and the Christian are agreed.

Then if a man is guilty of violating the law of God, he stands obnoxious to punishment; for should the Supreme Law Giver of the Universe suffer every act of sin to pass unpunished, his law must sink into contempt, and forever cease to be a law. All difference between vice and virtue, right and wrong, moral good and evil, must eternally cease: the character of the Law Giver must also sink into contempt, and the moral government of the Universe must be plunged into the most horrible confusion, and disorder; this, reason and the light of nature must acknowledge, therefore I conclude that so far the Deist and the Christian are agreed.

These things being established, I will now propose a few questions to the Deist, and I would expect him to bring forward the unerring book of creation, and strain his enlightened reason to its highest stretch, and answer them if he can:—When did time commence, or when did this world begin to exist? How did the human family first come into being? How did sin, death, and every species of natural and moral evil enter the world? You laugh at the Bible account of these things, but laughter is not evidence; prove from unanswerable arguments that the Bible account is wrong, and shew the honest inquirer after truth how these things came to pass.

But the principal questions I wish to ask, are:—How shall the guilty, offending sinner atone for his crimes, and how is he to obtain pardon, and reconciliation to his God? How shall the Sovereign of the Universe, a God of spotless purity and

immaculate holiness, extend his mercy and pardon and save the sinner, and at the same time support the honor and dignity of his law, and vindicate the rights of his government? Or how shall the guilty culprit be so effectually cured of the malignant moral pollution of sin as to become the object of love and favor of his God, so as to enjoy fellowship and communion with him in the present world, and be admitted to the full and eternal enjoyment of him in the heavenly state? Can reason tell? Can the light of nature prescribe the way? Can the unerring book of creation suggest any plan? No—reason fails—the light of nature and the book of creation, must stand in silence. The most wise, learned and enlightened Deist must acknowledge the necessity of a revelation from heaven to unfold the mystery—or he must represent the Deity an unholy being, like himself, who sees little or no evil in sin, who pays no more regard to the honor and dignity of his law, than the sinner does who tramples it under his feet.

But we assert it as an unquestionable truth, that candid and unprejudiced reason sees and acknowledges the necessity of a revelation from heaven to point out the way to peace, pardon, and reconciliation to God. The conscience of every sinner, even the conscience of every Deist, under solemn, realizing views of death and eternity, whispers in his breast that something like the Christian religion is necessary to his happiness beyond the grave. The LIGHT OF NATURE teaches the honest, candid pagan the propriety and possibility of a revelation from God. He infers it from his natural goodness. If God has provided a remedy suited to every temporal calamity, a medicine suited to every disease of the human body, will not he that is all goodness provide some remedy to cure the moral distempers of the mind? Will he not discover some way, by which depraved man may be delivered from the guilt and pollution of sin, and restored to his favor?

Upon such principles as these Socrates reasoned, and inferred the necessity and probability of the revelation of some divine remedy, and gave it as his opinion that such a remedy, would be revealed, and that he thought most probably the Deity would send some extraordinary person into the world, to teach the will of God, and the way to happiness. I would add the example of a poor savage, a native of Greenland, quoted by the author of the “Age of Infidelity.” Conversing with a missionary who was the instrument of his conversion,—“It is true, (said he) we were poor heathens, we knew nothing of God and a Saviour, but you are not to imagine that no Greenlander thinks about these things. I often thought that a fishing boat does not grow into existence of itself, it must be made by the labor of some man. Now the meanest bone has more skill displayed in its struc-

ture than a fishing boat; and there is still more skill displayed in the formation of man. Who made him? I often thought he proceeded from his parents, and they from theirs; but still there must be first parents, and from whence did they come? Common report informs me they grew out of the earth; but if so, why do not men grow out of the earth now? But from whence did the earth, the sea, the sun, the moon and stars come into existence? Some being made all these things—a being that always was, and never can cease to be. He must be wise and good. O that I did but know him, how I would love and honor him!—but so soon as I heard you speak of this Great Being, I directly believed with all my heart, because I had so long desired it."

Well, this despised book, the Bible, unveils the mystery and opens a door of hope to a lost world. In the words of our text, we have the blessed remedy exhibited—we have this divine revelation with all the unspeakable blessings contained in it:—
"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." In these words we have,

1st. The most joyful tidings that ever sounded in the ears of guilty sinners. An Almighty Saviour has come into our world for the most benevolent purposes—*"to seek and save them that were lost, to save sinners, even the chief of them."*

2d. We have a strong convincing proof of the Godhead and Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. *"He came into the world to save sinners."* "He came into the world"—this plainly implies that he existed before his incarnation; he could not be said to come into the world, unless he had a being before he came into it; this agrees with the idea of the Evangelist John: *"the word that was in the beginning with God, and was God, was made flesh and dwelt among us;"* and again with that of the apostle: *"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant."*

3d. We have a declaration of the unquestionable certainty of this precious truth: *"It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."* It is an infallible truth, its evidences are so clear and self-evident, that it is worthy of the highest credit.

In further treating on this subject, we shall simply prove that this Jesus who came into the world to save sinners is a Divine Saviour sent of God for that purpose.

I. We shall prove that Jesus is the Christ, from the testimony of scripture prophecies that expressly received their accomplishment in him.

But, says the Deist, I do not believe the Bible; therefore I will not admit its prophecies as testimony. To this I would answer,

no rational Deist can refuse it. If a witness be brought into court to prove an important fact, and he is a person of unquestionable veracity, the court must receive him as a good witness.— Such a witness is the Bible. The most daring infidel cannot produce a single instance where the veracity of its prophecies has failed; at the same time a variety of plain matters of fact stand, from age to age, as lasting monuments (more durable than brass) of the truth of these predictions.

The prophecy concerning Ishmael was, “*that he should be a wild man,*” that he should “*live in the desert,*” and that he should “*dwell in the presence of his brethren;*” i. e. that he and his posterity should never be conquered. Nothing can be more evident than the accomplishment of this prophecy. The Ishmaelites, or Arabs, have been wild men, inhabitants of the desert, for nearly three thousand years. They have robbed and plundered the neighboring nations from age to age, yet they have never been conquered nor brought under subjection to any people.— This is one standing monument of the truth of scripture prophecy.

The prophecy of Moses concerning the Jews, is another standing monument of the truth of the Bible as a divine revelation; this subject is so copious, that to demonstrate it in all its parts, would take up the bounds of a long discourse; all we can do at present, is only to hint at the subject. It was foretold that they should be “*rooted up out of their land;*” that their country should “*become a desolation;*” that “*strangers should devour it;*” that they should “*be driven to the four winds, scattered and dispersed among the nations of the earth.*” Every candid person who is acquainted with ancient and modern history, must be convinced of the certainty of the accomplishment of these things, as he is of his own existence. This is plain from the testimony of modern history, and of all the travellers who have passed through their country, which lies in a state of ruin and desolation, almost a barren desert. Again; it is an incontestible fact, that they are dispersed over the whole habitable globe, scattered among all the nations of the earth, and at the same time they remain a distinct and separate people.

When Babylon was mistress of the world, the metropolis of an universal empire, and in the meridian splendor of her glory, it was foretold that she “*should be conquered,*” and “*so completely overthrown and destroyed;*” that “*it should be no more inhabited forever;*” that “*the very place where it stood should be unknown.*” This prophecy was exactly fulfilled, as is evident from the testimony of history and geography.

When Egypt was one of the most opulent and powerful nations on the earth, it was foretold that it should be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, and be totally subjugated to the yoke of the Chaldean Empire; that it should never again be an independant

nation: that it should be the basest of all kingdoms, and never more be governed by a prince of its own nation. Now, every person acquainted with the history of the nation sof the earth, must be convincéd that this prediction has been exactly fulfilled. More than two hundred years ago Egypt was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, and made a province of the Chaldean Empire; after that empire, it was under the yoke of the Persian Emperors; it was next subdued by Alexander, andremained under the government of Grecian princes until it was conquered by the Romans; it was next under the government of the Emperors of Constantinople; next to that, of the Mamelukes; and at present it is a contemptible province of Turkey.

Again; when Tyre was mistress of the seas, the emporium of the world, and commanded the commerce of the whole earth, it was foretold that she should be conquered, and finally destroyed; that it should be reduced to such a state of degradation, “*that it should contain only fishermen's huts,*” that “*it should become a naked rock, where fishermen should dry their nets.*”— History informs us that this prediction has been exactly fulfilled. Volney, a Deist, who was at Tyre a few years ago, states in his travels through Egypt and Syria, “that the present state of Tyre exactly agrees with what the prophets foretold.”

We might mention the predictions of the Lord Jesus Christ, respecting the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Compare these predictions with the history of that melancholy event given by Flavius Josephus, an unbelieving Jew, and nothing can more exactly agree, than the prediction does with the event.— But I would earnestly entreat the honest inquirer after truth to read, with attention, Bishop Newton's Dissertation on the Prophecies, a book perhaps not equalled in the English language, where every particular is stated with such clearness and precision, that every candid mind must be convinced of the accomplishment of the prophecies and of the truth of divine revelation.

I now bring forward the Bible prophecies, to prove the divine mission of Jesus, that he is the Saviour of the world, and that God sent him to save even the chief of sinners.

From the fall of Adam until the incarnation of Christ, many predictions were delivered concerning the Messiah the Saviour, that was to come. The first prediction of Messiah was delivered by God himself, immediately after the fall, viz: “*The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.*” It was revealed to Abraham that the Saviour should be of his!offspring, and that “*IN ISAAC all the nations of the earth should be blessed.*” Moses informed the church while in the wilderness, that “*the Lord their God should raise up a great prophet to them, like unto him, and him they should hear.*” The prophet Isaiah foretold his incarnation, and yet spake of him as a divine person. “*Unto us a child is born,*

unto us a son is given,” &c. He represents him as a “*branch springing from the root of Jesse;*” as “*a great light that should spring up in the dark region of the shadow of death.*” The prophet Jeremiah foretold him as a “*king that should reign on the throne of David;*” who should execute “*judgment and justice on the earth;*” and that his name should be called “*the Lord our righteousness.*” The prophet Zachariah spake of him as “*the man, God’s fellow, who should be smitten by the sword of divine justice.*”—But to be more particular:

1st. It was foretold that “*he should be of the seed of Abraham;*” that “*he should spring from the royal family of David.*” In the Scriptures we are informed that “*he was made of the seed of Abraham;*” according to the flesh, and that he “*was born of the house and lineage of David.*” St. Matthew gives us the genealogy of his supposed father, descending from Solomon the son of David; and Luke gives us that of his mother, from Nathan the son of David.

2d. It was foretold by Micah, that “*Bethlhem in the land of Judea should be the place of his birth;*” and the Evangelists inform us that he was born there.

3d. It was foretold that the time of his appearance in the world would be when the sceptre departed from Judah, that is, when the family of Judah should finally lose the government or civil power over the Jews; and just at this period he did come. Though the Jews had been conquered many ages before by the Chaldeans, and afterwards were subjected to the Persians, to the Greeks and Romans, yet they permitted them to be governed by a chief magistrate of their own nation, and he was of the tribe of Judah and of the family of David, till just before the incarnation of Christ, when Herod, an Idumean, was made king, or viceroy of Judea.

4th. It was foretold that “*he should be despised and rejected of men;*” that he should “*be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.*” The Evangelists inform us that he was despised, reproached and persecuted, from the cradle to the grave.—When he was but a few days old, Herod thirsted for his blood, and inhumanly butchered all the infants of Bethlehem, in hopes of depriving him of his life. His character was maliciously slandered by the Scribes and Pharisees, because they could not bear his pointed reproofs, and plain, soul-searching doctrine; they termed him a drunkard, a devil, and a winebibber, and attributed all his miracles to a diabolical agency. His own countrymen according to the flesh, laid every possible snare to entangle him, and at last they inhumanly put him to the most painful and ignominious death.

5th. His sufferings and death were foretold by the prophet Isaiah, “*he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our*

iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him.” The prophet Daniel foretold that “*in seventy weeks from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, the Messiah should be put to death;*” and according to calculations of the most exact chronologers, this prediction was fulfilled precisely at the time foretold. Many of the most minute circumstances of his sufferings were predicted by the prophets; saith Isaiah: “*He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*” David foretold “*that his hand and foot should be pained and pierced; that they would mock his thirst with gall and vinegar; that they would cast lots for his vesture: and yet not a bone of him would be broken.*” An examination of the history of his last sufferings will show, that these circumstances were minutely accomplished. Isaiah foretold that he would make “*his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death;*” and the sacred historian informs us that he was crucified between two thieves, and was buried by Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counsellor, in a new tomb he designed for himself.

II. This Jesus, who came into the world to save sinners, is a divine Saviour, sent of God for that very purpose. This is evident from the miracles he performed: he healed the sick; he cast out devils; he opened the eyes of the blind; he raised the dead; he fed five thousand persons upon five loaves and two fishes; he walked upon the waves of the sea; he commanded the winds and storms and they obeyed him. The design of these miracles was to prove that he was the Saviour of the world, that he came upon a divine mission, and that his Gospel is a revelation from heaven; hence he says to the unbelieving Jews: “*The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me; if I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.*”

But, says the Deist, it is easy to account for these miracles; Jesus wrought them by what is called sleight of hand, by an imposition on the senses of mankind, therefore they were not miracles. I answered, this is a most unfair and unjust assertion. If we consider the nature of all the miracles upon record that Jesus wrought, it is impossible in the very nature of things, that there could be any imposition in the case; they were wrought openly, and in the presence of thousands of spectators; in the presence of his most malignant enemies, who viewed every part of his conduct with the most critical eye. Again, certain circumstances attending the subjects of his miracles, rendered all deception impossible. On the Sabbath day, and in the Jewish synagogue, he publicly cured a woman of a distressing infirmity under which she had laboured for eighteen years, and by which she was bowed together. Could there be any sleight of hand or decep-

tion here? Did not this woman's family, her relations, neighbors, and acquaintances, all know that during this long period she had been affected by this disease, that she had suffered much and was bowed together? When she was publicly healed before a large congregation, when they saw her relieved from her complaint, her body straightened and restored to its proper attitude could there be a deception?

But again, suppose a child was born in Henderson County, stone blind, and lived till he was twenty or twenty-five years of age totally destitute of sight, would not his parents, his relations, and all the neighborhood know that he was blind? and if, at the age of twenty or twenty-five, some extraordinary person would anoint his eyes with clay, and tell him to wash in a certain pool and he should see, and upon obeying these directions, his eyes were opened so that he could clearly discern every visible object; could this be a deception? The same illustration might be given of the case of the lame man, who was healed by Jesus Christ at the pool of Bethesda; of his raising Lazarus from the dead, after he had been in a state of putrefaction. But even the most malignant of his enemies who were eye witnesses of his miracles, never disputed their reality; but in order to evade the force of their evidence, they reproached him for working them on the Sabbath day, and ascribed the power of working them to Beelzebub. When he raised Lazarus from the dead, the Pharisees did not question the reality of the miracle; for say they, "*If we let this man alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans will take away our place and nation.*"

But, says the Deist, I do not believe he ever wrought one of these miracles; I think the history that records them is a deception. I answer, the history that records them is genuine—it is impossible for it to be an imposition upon the world; for the history that records these miracles was written by the Evangelists, who were eye witnesses of the facts. As these historians state that the miracles were wrought publicly, and in the presence of vast multitudes of spectators, if such miracles had never been performed, the populace at large would have resisted such a glaring falsehood with contempt, and the Jews and Pagans, who were inveterate enemies of Christianity, would have detected and exposed the falsehood; and, doubtless, this would have put a final check to the progress of Christianity.

But the objector replies: Perhaps the writings ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, were written many ages after their deaths, and their names were falsely affixed to them.—This never has been, nor can be proven; but the contrary can be easily proven. But admitting it to be true, it would just be as impossible, then, to impose upon the world. The matter would then have appeared such a barefaced falsehood that it would

have been immediately rejected; for every person of reason and consideration, would at once have recollected that such astonishing events had never been heard of before. The question would be asked, how did it come to pass that persons who lived in those times, did not record such extraordinary events?—For example, we will suppose that a person, at the present time, would write a history of the late revolutionary war; that in this history he would assert that General Washington, in the year 17—, marched his army across the Delaware, on the surface of the water, in a miraculous manner, without bridge, boat, or any other medium of passage; would not every officer and soldier now living, who had fought under Washington's command, detect the falsehood and reject it with disdain? Would it not be impossible to impose such a falsehood upon the present age?

But suppose that such a history, stating such a circumstance, should appear one hundred years hereafter; would it not be as impossible to impose such a falsehood upon the public then, as it would be at the present time? For every man in his senses would at once inquire how it came to pass, that such an extraordinary circumstance was never heard of before, and how it could have been omitted by the historians who lived at the time when such an event is represented to have transpired? It is contrary to reason and common sense that falsehoods of such magnitude could be imposed upon the world, and be believed and received as unquestionable truths, from age to age. Therefore, as the miracles attributed to Jesus Christ were wrought openly, before vast multitudes of spectators and many of them his malicious enemies, as these miracles were of such a nature as to admit of no deception or imposition upon the senses of mankind, and as they were recorded by men who were eye-witnesses of the facts, and as the Jews and Pagans, their contemporaries, never presumed to deny that such miracles were wrought, we assert, UPON UNQUESTIONABLE EVIDENCE, that such miracles were wrought by JESUS CHRIST, and consequently, they are an incontrovertible proof of his divine mission, and of the absolute certainty of divine revelation.

III. JESUS CHRIST IS A DIVINE SAVIOUR, sent of God to redeem lost sinners. This will appear if we consider the immaculate holiness and spotless purity of his life and doctrine. Thomas Paine asks the question: "What reason have I to believe in Jesus speaking in the Gospel, more than I have to believe in Mahomet speaking in the Alcoran? Both of them pretend to have a divine commission."—A great many reasons might be assigned; but here is one at hand: Mahomet came like a murderer; he propagated his doctrines by the sword, and spread bloodshed and slaughter wherever he went. But Jesus came upon the most kind, gracious and benevolent errand. "*He came to seek*

and to save them that were lost." He came to save sinners, even the chief of them. When his disciples, through human weakness and infirmity, pray him to bring fire from heaven to destroy his malicious persecutors, he severely rebuked them, and told them that "*he came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.*" Search the history of all ages and generations of the world, and you will not find so amiable a character, a person of such untainted holiness and purity, nor such an example of piety and virtue. His whole life was spent in acts of benevolence—healing the sick, relieving the distressed, giving speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, and opening the eyes of the blind; teaching men, both by example and precept, their duty to God and to each other.

His object was not the applause of men; for when he performed the most gracious and miraculous cures on the diseased, he charged them to tell no man what he had done. When he was reviled he reviled not again. He pitied and wept over his most malicious enemies. He prayed for the forgiveness of his blood-thirsty persecutors, even when they were mocking at his agonies, and sporting with his dying groans. Read the history of his life, as recorded by the evangelists, and his character appears without the smallest stain; indeed, even the most inveterate enemies of Christianity acknowledge, that he was a person of the most unblemished piety and virtue. Porphyry, though a malicious infidel, speaks of him as a man of the most extraordinary wisdom, approved of by the gods, and taken up to heaven for his virtue. Severus, the Roman Emperor, was so enamoured both with the excellency of his character and with the purity of his life, that he would have adopted him into the number of his gods, and would have built him a temple, had not the opposition of his pagan subjects prevented it. And every sensible Deist of the present day, speaks of him as the most upright, virtuous man that ever lived. Look at his doctrine in its purity and spirituality, and in its nature and tendency, and every candid Deist must acknowledge that it becomes a God, and is calculated to promote the happiness of mankind.

When treating on our duty to God, he tells us that the divine law requires us "*to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.*" And can any thing be more fit and proper in the very reason and nature of things, than to love infinite excellency, beauty and perfection? What can be more proper than that we love our creator, preserver and benefactor, who is the very essence of all loveliness?

When he teaches the nature of our worship and obedience to God, he requires the most genuine, unfeigned sincerity of heart. "*Not every one that says unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they that do the will of my father who is in heaven.*" He every where tells us that the reality of our love to

God, and the sincerity of our profession, must be evinced by a life of holiness and virtue. “*Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.*” “*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*” “*Let your light shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your father who is in heaven.*” And again, “*Be ye perfect, as your father who is in heaven is perfect.*”

When he teaches our duty to man, he commands us “*to do unto all men as we would that they should do unto us.*” “*Render unto every man his due.*” “*Love your enemies: bless them that curse you; pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.*” Examine his doctrine as it is illustrated in his sermon on the mount, and the parable of the good Samaritan; view all his doctrines and precepts in their nature and tendency, and reason and the light of nature must confess, that he was a teacher sent from God.

IV. The efficacy of the gospel on the lives and conduct of men, is an incontestable proof that JESUS IS THE CHRIST, and that his gospel IS A REVELATION FROM HEAVEN. When we consider the apparent insufficiency of the means, and the astonishing effects produced by them, every candid mind must acknowledge that nothing less than the power of God, by such means, could have produced such effects. For twelve illiterate men to proclaim to the world that a man, who died upon a cross at Jerusalem, was the son of God and the Saviour of the world—for these men to go on, in opposition to the wisdom, superstition, pride and prejudices of mankind, persuading them to forsake the religion of their fathers, and the imaginary gods of their ancestors, to deny themselves of all their beloved vices, to forsake the love and practice of every sin; to do all this at the risk of suffering reproach, persecution, and death in its most tremendous forms, with no other means of compulsion than the force of argument, no other encouragement but the hopes of happiness after death; a blessedness of which mankind were ignorant ;—this, the apostle Paul tells us, was a “*stumbling block to the Jews, and to the learned Greeks foolishness;*” while “*it was the wisdom of God to them that believed.*” What was the effect? The conversion and salvation of many millions. Under one sermon, on the day of Pentecost, three thousand souls were converted. In a few days we find the number of Christians increased to five thousand, and in a few years the power of the gospel overspread Egypt, Syria, and Arabia. It went like a rapid flame over all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, as far as Greece and Italy, and in a very short time it overspread Europe and Asia, and extended even to the distant parts of the then known world.—Tacitus asserts, that in the reign of Nero, about twenty years after the death of Christ, there were multitudes of Christians at Rome against whom the Emperor raised a persecution, attended with such circumstances of ignominy and cruelty, as raised the

compassion even of their enemies. Pliny writes to the emperor Trajan, that many persons of both sexes, and of every age and rank, were infected with this superstition, as he calls it; that it had got into the villages as well as the cities; that the temples of the heathen deities were almost deserted, and hardly any could be found who would buy victims for them. Again, when we consider that it not only overspread the world with an irresistible power, but at the same time triumphed over every public opposition, and the most cruel and bloody persecutions that the combined powers of earth and hell could possibly exert, every candid, reflecting mind must acknowledge that God was its author, and that it is revelation from heaven. The idolatrous superstitions of the pagan world, which had prevailed for many centuries, stood in direct opposition to it—the civil power exerted itself for its destruction—the Roman empire for ages strained every nerve for its extermination—death in its most tremendous forms was resorted to; but the more the Christians were persecuted, tortured and butchered, the more their numbers increased, till their persecutors were constrained to confess, that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. What an unquestionable accomplishment of Christ's prediction, "*That its beginning was like a grain of mustard-seed, the least of all seeds, yet became a mighty tree, and extended its branches over the whole earth.*"

V. But, lastly, Jesus Christ is a Saviour sent from God, and his gospel is a revelation from heaven. This is evident to all true Christians, who have experienced the power and efficacy of his pardoning and peace-speaking blood. They have a knowledge of him of which the wisest philosopher, and the most accomplished scholar is ignorant, while in an unregenerate state; for they have seen his glory by the eye of faith; they have felt the witness of a sealed pardon through his merits; they have peace with God, and joy unspeakable and full of glory, by faith in his all-sufficient satisfaction to the law and justice of God; and God's spirit bears witness with theirs, that they are interested in it.—Their natures are changed from the love of sin to the love of holiness; "*old things are passed away, and all things are become new.*" They can draw near to God as to a reconciled father. They can meet death with undaunted bravery, and rejoice in the prospect of eternal felicity.

Ah, says the Deist, this is all enthusiasm. I ask, what is enthusiasm? Enthusiasm has neither Christ for its object, nor the Bible for its guide. But that joy and peace in believing, that has Christ for its object and foundation, the love of God for its guide, and manifests itself by love to God and man, and by a universal obedience to all the commands of God, is not enthusiasm: it is a divine reality. With such a religion as this, the Christian can be certain of his interest in the love and favor of his God, and of

eternal happiness after death; and, therefore, he possesses such unerring testimony of the divinity of Christ, and of the certainty of divine revelation, that it is impossible to shake his belief or move his confidence.

But what is the import of the soul-reviving declaration, "*He came into the world to save sinners?*" From what does he save them?

1st. He saves them from the curse and condemning sentence of God's righteous law: and what a salvation is this! Created wisdom and eloquence cannot describe it. Angels desire to look into it. Jesus, the brightness of the Father's glory—he that was in the form of God—the Eternal Word, came into the world to save sinners; "*he was made flesh, became of no reputation,*" and stood in the sinner's law room and place. He endured in his own soul and body what was equivalent to all the pains of hell, and he paid down to the justice of God the whole infinite sum of the elect's ransom. In a word, by his holy life, bloody sufferings, and painful death, he has wrought out an all-sufficient salvation for the chief of sinners, the worst of men and women.

Again, he saves sinners from the very being of sin; from its dominion and enslaving power, and from all its malignant consequences. The angel told his supposed father, before his birth, that, "*he should be called Jesus, because he should save his people from their sins.*" The prophet Daniel tells us, "*that the Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself;*" "*that he should finish transgression, make an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness.*" He saves both by price and power. He paid the price of their ransom to the justice of God, in scarlet streams of divine blood, that flowed from his breaking heart till a holy God declared himself well satisfied for his righteousness' sake. He saves them by power, for he plucks them as brands from the burning, in the day of their conversion to God; he snatches them out of the jaws of the roaring Lion of hell. By the influences of his spirit, and by his word and ordinances, and by the dispensations of his providence, he purges them from sin; he sanctifies and prepares them as vessels of mercy, to be filled and overflow with eternal and indescribable glory, in the blissful regions of the of the heavenly paradise.

He saves them from the power of the Devil, from the sting and curse of death and the grave, and from the last and least remains of sin. This great salvation contains in it, not only a complete deliverance from sin and hell, but an exaltation to the highest heaven. It contains sealed pardon and peace with God—joy in the Holy Ghost—the witness of the spirit—and a sense of Jehovah's love shed abroad in the heart. It contains eternal life, and the most exalted blessedness in the immediate

presence and full fruition of an infinite God. It contains an *“inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; joys that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.”*

How precious, then, is Jesus to them that believe. When a pardoned sinner beholds the glory, beauty and preciousness of Jesus, does not this sight communicate the very foretaste of heaven—

“While sweetly, humbly he beholds at length,
Christ as his only righteousness and strength??”

How do you suppose the dying thief, who was crucified by his side, felt when Jesus said to him: *“This day thou shalt be with me in paradise?”* How do you think that poor blood-thirsty murderer, who pierced his side with his spear, felt when the rich tide of blood and water which burst from his heart, washed him whiter than the snow? For it appears evident to me, that he was converted and saved, as this is the literal fulfillment of Zachariah’s prophecy: *“They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn,” &c.*

S E R M O N I I.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST A MIGHTY CONQUEROR.

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.—ISAIAH lxiii. 1.

THE promise which the Eternal Father made to the Son in the covenant of redemption, was, that “*he should have a numerous seed;*” that “*he should see the travail of his soul and be satisfied;*” that “*he should have a name above every name;*” that “*every knee in heaven, earth and hell should bow to him.*”

When we consider the infinite glory and dignity of his person; when we view the triumphant victories of his cross, and the greatness, the glory, the fulness and sufficiency of that salvation which he has wrought out by his bloody sufferings and dying agonies, we must acknowledge that the united wisdom of angels, archangels, and spirits of just men made perfect, cannot express the ten-thousandth part of his glory. Join all the glorious names of wisdom, love and power, that mortals ever knew, or angels ever bore—all are too mean to speak his truth, or to set forth his glory.

All nature has been racked to produce metaphors. Figures the most bold and significant that the material world can afford, have been brought forward to illustrate the inexpressible glories of Immanuel; and when all is done, we must say, a greater than Solomon is here; we must confess, with the Queen of Sheba that the half cannot be told.

In our text he is represented as a mighty conqueror, returning from the field of battle with garments rolled in blood, carrying in triumph the trophies of final victory. “*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness, of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.*” It was a practice

among the eastern nations, when a commander returned victorious from final conquest, he entered the metropolis of his own country in triumph. Hundreds and thousands crowded from every part to see the amazing exhibition. The conqueror was initiated with the highest possible pomp and grandeur, his attendants bearing the rich trophies of his victories—the arms, standards, and valuable prizes he had taken from the enemy; the nobility, princes, and commanders of the conquered led in chains, or bound to his chariot wheels. To this custom it is evident the prophet alludes when he introduces the almighty, all-conquering Jesus, coming from Edom, in triumph from Bozrah, with garments dipped in blood, glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength.

Edom was that part of Arabia which lay adjacent to Judea. It was inhabited by the descendants of Esau, who in every age and generation were inveterate enemies to the church and people of God. Therefore Edom is here taken metaphorically for the principalities and powers of hell, the spiritual dominion of the Devil. Bozrah was the metropolis of Edom, therefore when the Almighty takes his departure from Bozrah, it expresses complete victory and final conquest.

When a general carries his arms into an enemy's country, he commonly destroys the military force, the very vitals of the enemy. When he takes the metropolis, every other post must fall an easy prey. Therefore, coming in triumph from Bozrah, doubtless, signifies the glorious victory of Calvary. It was there that the all-conquering Jesus subdued the powers of Hell, bruised the serpent's head, and gave the fatal blow to the vitals of the Devil's power. By this decisive victory the way was prepared for all the glorious conquests which he shall obtain, until all things are put under his feet, until every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess his name in heaven and earth.

He is represented as coming from Bozrah with dyed garments. He bears the marks of a triumphant conqueror, for he is clothed in a vesture dipped in blood. In the following verse he says, *I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.*"

The prophet also describes him as "*glorious in his apparel.*" Although he entered the bloody field in disguise, in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the form of a servant, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, despised and rejected by the people; as the Psalmist expresses it, "*a worm, and no man;*" yet now he appears in all the pomp and grandeur of the Godhead; he comes off victorious; he is "*glorious in his apparel,*" dressed in all the brilliant robes of Deity, clothed in all the essential glories, perfections

and attributes of the Godhead. Thus he is described by St. John, in the Revelation. And I saw “*in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword; and his countenance was as the Sun shineth in his strength.*”

Again, he is represented as “*travelling in the greatness of his strength.*” This sets forth his omnipotence. He is the self-existent Sovereign of the universe, possessed of almighty power. He will conquer until all things are put under his feet. He comes “*from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah,*” like a mighty conqueror travelling in the greatness of his strength, going on from conquering to conquer, achieving one victory after another, until all his ransomed millions are rescued from the jaws of the Devil, and put in possession of the heavenly inheritance, “*which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*”

We may inquire who asks the question, “*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?*” I answer, that it is the church, or the prophet in the name of the church; or every pardoned sinner, who, by the eye of faith, beholds his glory and the infinite beauty and loveliness of his person. The happy soul who views the glory of God in the face of Jesus, who sees his almighty sufficiency and willingness to save, who contemplates all the attributes and perfections of the divine nature, all the infinite glory and beauty of the Godhead manifested in the triumphant victories he has gained over sin, death and hell; he is so filled with praise, gratitude and love, so lost in wonder and adoration, that he is ready to cry out with the prophet, “*Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments?*” Oh, what an infinite beauty I see in him! What a glory! Oh, how fair! how sweet! how precious! how lovely! What a Christ! What a salvation!

Who can describe his worth, his glory or his grace, equal to the views of the soul thus lost in wonder? The tongue of an arch-angel falters, Gabriel sinks beneath the weighty task. And, therefore, the prophet represents the almighty conqueror resolving the question. “*The Lion of the tribe of Judah alone is worthy to take the book and loose the seals.*” He answers the question in a style expressive of the complete sufficiency of that salvation which he procured—expressive of his almighty power to save to the uttermost the poor, guilty, wretched sinner. “*I THAT SPEAK IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, MIGHTY TO SAVE.*” I present to ruined, naked

sinners, a glorious robe of sanctifying righteousness; I speak peace to the troubled conscience; I offer pardon and reconciliation to God; to the soul of the disconsolate sinner I whisper joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. Therefore, I am mighty to save; for my almighty arm, my omnipotent grace, can extricate the sinner from the lowest abyss of misery and woe.

In the farther prosecution of this subject we shall,

I. Take a view of the glorious conquest achieved by the death and sufferings of the **LORD JESUS CHRIST**.

II. Conclude by passing a few brief observations upon the words "**MIGHTY TO SAVE.**"

I. Take a view of the glorious conquest achieved by the death and sufferings of the **Lord Jesus Christ**. Then let us for a moment consider the state of the world, at large, previous to that glorious revolution effected by the victories of the cross.

It is scarcely necessary to inform you how the old Serpent deceived our first parents, and robbed them of their native innocence; how Adam and all his race became infected with sin, as a malignant poison, and sunk into a state of condemnation. All mankind revolted from their God—became the willing slaves of the Devil—partook of his image, his temper, and disposition so entirely, that as the Divine Spirit expresses it, "*every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; yea, he is prone to do evil, as the sparks are to fly upward.*" He is filled with enmity to the laws and the government of his Creator, and at the same time delighted with the service, the mean drudging and vassalage of the Devil. Hence Satan became, by his own consent, his Lord and Sovereign. He erected the world into a kind of universal empire, and held the whole human race under his tyrannical power and dominion; possessed the same place in their affections that God occupies in the bosoms of holy and happy beings;—and hence it is that the Devil is styled "*the prince of this world, the ruler of the darkness of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the God of this world, &c.*"—Thus mankind having become the subjects of the Devil, were righteously condemned to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire with him, as the just reward of their rebellion against God.

Time would fail to inform you of the scenes of wickedness, the dissipation, the debauchery, the falsehood, the deceit, the injustice and bloodshed, that have filled the earth in every age and generation of the world; how that the whole of the habitable globe, except the small spot of Judea, was in a state of the most horrible ignorance of God; how that the Devil was truly their God, worshipped and obeyed as such by them; that the Eternal Word, who was in the beginning with God, and was God, became flesh and dwelt amongst us. He, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, the great, uncreated I AM,

took upon himself the likeness of a servant, and made himself of no reputation, that he might destroy the works of the Devil, and subdue the empire of hell, and establish an everlasting kingdom of righteousness in the world.

To effect this glorious revolution, two great objects must be accomplished; first, he must dethrone the usurper and destroy his kingdom; secondly, he must redeem the guilty sinner from the curse of the law and the demands of offended justice:—therefore, he must be a Saviour, both by price and power. Hence says the apostle, “*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*”

But no sooner does he make his appearance in the world, than all hell is alarmed. Herod, like a blood-hound, endeavors to destroy him, while yet an infant only a few days old. No sooner does he enter upon his public ministry, than the old Serpent attacks him with his fiery temptations, hoping to ensnare the second Adam as he had done the first. But the Almighty Conqueror is proof against every assault. The tempter is obliged to retreat with shame and disgrace.

We might tell you how he stirred up the Scribes and Pharisees, the Sadducees, and all the Jewish Sanhedrim, to persecute him, to revile him, to slander his character; ascribing his God-like miracles to the Devil, endeavoring to ensnare him in his speech, and laying in wait to murder him. But we shall pass to the bloody conflict on Mount Calvary, which crowned him with victory. And here let us inquire, what were the sufferings of the Son of God? how dreadful his tortures? how excruciating his pains? The tongue of an arch-angel cannot tell, nothing less than the infinite mind of God can comprehend them. See him in the garden of Gethsemane, though the band of soldiers had not seized him; the thorns and scourges, the nails and spear were unfelt; yet he had the most perfect knowledge of the dreadfulness of the wrath of an infinite God due to sin. He could comprehend the full extent of the curse of the divine law, which would have crushed ten thousand worlds of angels to the lowest hell. Therefore, under the dreadful apprehensions of his approaching sufferings, his humanity is so shocked that he is filled with the most woeful consternation. Hear him crying out, “*My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Oh, my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.*” Behold the Saviour’s agony, see him falling upon the ground, the blood gushing from every pore of his body. If his sufferings were so intolerable in anticipation, how dreadful must they have been when all the fury of heaven, earth and hell was poured upon him. Betrayed by one of his professed friends, he is sold to

his enemies for thirty pieces of silver. A band of soldiers sieze and lead him away. The hands which uphold the universe are bound with cords. See him arraigned before Pilate's bar, and found innocent, but yet condemned. Now behold the harmless Lamb of God, as the Psalmist expresses it, surrounded by the bulls of Bashan, fierce and strong: i. e. by Herod, Pilate and the Chief Priests. Insulted by the Roman soldiery, abused by the low, mean and contemptible rabble. See that face so lovely spat upon, black and mangled, swelled by strokes, and red with gore. Behold him who came to work a spotless robe to cover naked souls, himself stripped and scourged with knotty whips, till his bones might be counted. See the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, covered with a purple robe of mock royalty. See him who crowns with glory millions of pardoned rebels, himself crowned with thorns, piercing his temples with streaming wounds. After all this, he is made to bear his cross through the streets of Jerusalem, and up Mount Calvary to the place of execution. Behold, he is laid upon the cross—his measure taken—his feet nailed by iron spikes to the upright pillar—his arms are extended upon the transverse beam, and his hands made fast—the bloody tree erected and jolted with violence into the pit prepared for its reception, which racks his body and tares his wounds with an unutterable torture. Now behold the Lamb of God, the bleeding, dying Jesus, suspended between heaven and earth, by his tender hands and feet, as a mark for the justice of God, the malice of devils, and the rage of wicked men. But these torments of the body are small, when compared to the excruciating pains, the agonizing tortures of the soul. The vengeance of God incensed against sin, falls upon him with infinite weight. The sins of the whole elect world, seize upon him like so many deadly vipers. The curse of the divine law, which hurled legions of Angels, excelling in strength, from the heaven of heavens, to the bottomless pit of Hell, was laid upon him in its full extent. He endured in his soul and body, all the pains which his blood-bought millions would have suffered to all eternity in Hell.

Let us suppose a burning glass so constructed as to collect all the rays of heat emanating from the sun into one focal point. It would in a moment consume a mountain of flint, and make it flow a stream of liquid fire. But this would bear no comparison to the tremendous blaze of divine vengeance, which shot from the burning throne of justice, and concentrated upon the person of Christ.

But what rendered his sufferings most intolerable of all, was the hiding of his father's face. The sweet smiles of Jehovah, which he had enjoyed from the earliest period of eternity, are now withdrawn. The sun of righteousness is eclipsed in mid-

night darkness. Every drop of comfort from heaven and earth is gone. Now hear the incarnate God, with groans that shake the Universe, crying out, in the most intolerable anguish: “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani.*” The rocks are rent—the mountains shake—all nature is convulsed. “*The veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.*” The graves give up their dead—the heavens are clad in sackcloth—the sun is wrapped in darkness. Now behold the rose of Sharon, the lily of Paradise, dipped in streams of divine blood.

The eternal I AM, the essence of being, the fountain of life, sinks in the agonies of death, a pale and lifeless corpse, and with a loud “IT IS FINISHED,” gives up the ghost.

Jesus drinks the bitter cup,
The wine press treads alone.

But human reason asks, Is this the mighty conqueror, the heroic Jesus, you have been describing? This man, thus crucified in weakness, hanging dead upon the cross, whom Joseph of Arimathea wraps in linen and lays in a grave; is this the invincible hero? Why does he not act the God? Why not make his lightnings flash, his thunders roll, his vengeance burst in storms upon his bloody persecutors?

His disciples are brought to a dreadful stand. They see their Master dead and laid in the grave. They know not what to make of it. “*We trusted,*” say they, “*that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.*” We may suppose the Angelic armies are struck with astonishment, when they behold their mighty Maker die; the Creator of all worlds a mangled, bloody corpse.

Around the bloody tree,
They pressed with strong desire,
That wondrous sight to see—
The Lord of Life expire.
And could these eyes have known a tear,
Had dropt it there,
In sad surprise.

But Jehovah’s paths are in the deep, his footsteps in the mighty waters. *Christ crucified is, indeed, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to every one that believes, the wisdom of God and the power of God to salvation.*

However pagans may scoff, and infidels sneer at the crucifixion and death of the Son of God, it was the most memorable and the most glorious transaction that heaven and earth, God, angels, or men ever witnessed.

The conquest of Babylon by Cyrus—the overturning of the great Persian Empire by Alexander—the victories of Hannibal, Scipio and Bonaparte, which have crowned the little heroes of this world with immortal honor, and raised their fame to the

stars, are all but like the frantic projects of Bedlamites, or the unmeaning manœuvres of insects, when compared with the victory gained by the Almighty Jesus over the powers of Darkness, upon Mount Calvary. Here he destroyed the empire of hell; he went down into the dark territory of death, defeated him in his own dominions, and deprived him of his poisonous sting. It was, indeed, a spectacle worthy the admiration of the Universe, to see the despised Galilean, one in the likeness of the son of man, wresting the keys of death and hell from the devil; to see him entangling the rulers of darkness in their own nets, and defeating them by their own stratagems. They made one of his disciples betray, and another deny him; they made the Jews accuse, and the Romans crucify him;—but, after all this, the wonderful Counsellor out-generalled the old Serpent. Here the Lion of the tribe of Judah was too powerful for the roaring Lion of hell. The unparalleled cruelty of men and devils is overruled by the wisdom of God, to effect the pardon of millions of rebellious sinners; in short, to make an end of all sin, and bring in an everlasting righteousness.

Though he was crucified in weakness, yet, says M'Laurin, “with one hand he grasped multitudes of poor lost sinners, just ready to plunge into hell; and with the other he grasped a heavenly inheritance, unspeakable joys, and an eternal weight of glory, to give them—and died with the shout of victory in his mouth, crying, ‘*IT IS FINISHED.*’”

But come to his resurrection, and does he not appear a mighty conqueror indeed! Behold, he breaks the bars of death, and rises like a God, proclaiming his victory—that he has fulfilled the law, satisfied divine justice, and purchased eternal blessedness for his followers.

Uprising from the darksome tomb,
See the triumphant Jesus come,
The Lord of Glory leaves the prison,
And Angels tell that he is risen.

Yes, they tell the weeping women at the sepulchre, “*Fear not, ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see where the Lord lay.*” He remains forty days upon earth; organizes his new empire, established upon the ruins of the devil’s kingdom; and though his church was then like a grain of mustard seed, yet it has grown and increased, and will continue to expand until it fills the whole habitable globe—until the knowledge of God covers the earth, as the waters the face of the great deep.

In the mean time he condescends to visit his poor persecuted followers. He meets Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, and tenderly accosts her: “*Woman, why weepest thou?*” “*Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren,*

and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." On the eve of the Sabbath, when his poor mourning disciples were met together, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews, the blessed Jesus, their glorious risen Lord, appears in the midst of them, surprises them with his sweet presence, and says: '*Peace be unto you.*' He shows them his hands and feet. As the two disciples were going to Emmaus, he draws nigh and travels with them. He opens their minds to understand the Scriptures, then makes himself known to them in the breaking of bread. Overjoyed, they return to Jerusalem—run to their brethren—and while telling them the blessed news, Jesus is in the midst of them again, saying, "*Peace be unto you;*" and while they are terrified and affrighted at his presence, with all the tenderness of a God, he addresses them: "*Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*" "*And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, that he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.*" Like a mighty conqueror, he ascends far above the visible heavens to his native glory, and sits down at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

Now all heaven wonders and adores, while angels and archangels cry in the language of the text: "*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?*"

But again, this Jesus, the friend of sinners, he that is mighty to save, is a glorious conqueror. The dreadful battle on Mount Calvary, though decisive, was the prelude to innumerable God-like victories, which he has since achieved, over the arch fiend of hell. The apostle John thus describes him in his victorious military career; "*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.*"

The next glorious victory recorded of him was won upon the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost came down like the rushing of a mighty wind, when the glory of God filled the place. On this day, under one sermon, three thousand souls were brought, like humble penitents, to the feet of Jesus; and amongst them some of the most bloodthirsty monsters, who had imbrued their hands in the blood of the Son of God. And in a few days after, we find his conquest rapidly increasing. When the apostles and their new converts were met together with one accord, and engaged in importunate prayer, the Holy Spirit descends from Heaven with mighty power, and shakes the place in which they were assembled.

Soon after the triumphant Lord spreads his conquest over all Syria, Arabia, Ethiopia, and Egypt; along the Mediterranean throughout Asia Minor, Greece and Italy; thence to the most distant parts of the habitable earth, until millions are rescued from the jaws of the roaring Lion of hell. And many have been the glorious days of the outpouring of the Spirit of God, bestowed upon our wretched world, to the salvation of millions. Three of these great days of the Son of Man I have witnessed. One, on the Monongahela, where I first felt the all-conquering power of the love of Jesus, which to all eternity I shall never forget, was at a Sacrament on the morning of a Sabbath in 1786. The second in North Carolina, in 1789. The third in Kentucky, from 1797 until 1802. And may I ever lie the lowest, humblest creature in the dust, when I reflect that the Lord made use of me, mean and unworthy, to begin the glorious work in both these blessed seasons. I rejoice at the prospect. I expect to meet with many souls in heaven, who were my spiritual children in both these revivals.

But, glory to God, the all-conquering Jesus will ride on the chariot of his gospel, gaining victory after victory, until his empire shall spread from pole to pole; till it includes all Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. Soon the time shall come when a nation will be born in a day; when the small stone cut out of the mountain without hands will become an exceeding great mountain and fill the whole world; when the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as the light of seven days; when the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters do the face of the great deep.

Another trait in the character and conduct of this conqueror, is, that, after having subdued the veteran soldiers and commanders of the camp of hell, he converts them into the most bold and undaunted heroes of the Cross.

See Saul, the bloody persecutor, bound for Damascus, commanding a troop for the tyrant of hell, intending death and destruction to all that named the name of Christ. Jesus arrests him in his course, strikes conviction so deep into his soul, that he falls prostrate to the ground, and cries in bitter anguish: "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*" See him pardoned, justified, and sent as a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ to Kings and Gentiles; and behold him one of the unconquerable champions in the cause of Jesus, fighting under the banner of the Cross, and bringing whole nations to bow to the royal sceptre of Immanuel.

During the three first centuries, the Devil struggled hard, by the instrumentality of the Roman emperors, to recover his kingdom. By ten successive persecutions they endeavored to extirpate Christianity from the earth. But, as the persecutors themselves acknowledge, the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the

church; for the more they tortured the Christians, the more they butchered them by death in its most aggravated forms, the more the work of God prevailed and their number increased. But it was under the emperor Dioclesian, that the Devil made his most vigorous exertion to destroy the church. The Christians were put to death with such slaughter, that the empire was measurably depopulated. On public days they were collected and butchered by thousands, until the streets ran in blood. Every Christian known in the world was put to death. Now hell triumphed.— The devil boasted final victory. A coin was struck by the Roman Emperor, with this inscription: “Christianity abolished, and the worship of the gods restored.” But Jesus, the mighty to save, reserves his victory till the most desperate, hopeless period. When it seems that all is lost, Dioclesian dies, and Constantine is proclaimed Emperor. While on his march to Rome, the victorious Lord displays his almighty power, converts Constantine, and brings him as an humble penitent to his feet. He ascends the throne as a Christian, demolishes the pagan temples, and destroys their idols.

Now the religion of Jesus rises, like the phoenix from its ashes, “*bright as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.*”

Many examples might be enumerated of the triumphing law of Christ; but it were useless to dwell upon particulars. View the countless millions of the redeemed out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people upon the earth; every individual of whom, is an astonishing wonder of mercy to himself and to the angelic hosts.

Again, let us compare the mighty heroes, the bloody conquerors of this world, with our Lord Jesus Christ; those who have overturned thrones and empires, and drenched the world in blood. When thus compared, Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar, Tamerlane, Frederic of Prussia, and Napoleon, dwindled into insignificant pygmies. All their plans, victories, conquests and revolutions fall as far beneath the glory of the triumphs of the Cross and their attendant consequences, as the cob-houses of children are inferior to the solar system.

Cyrus, indeed, drained the great river Euphrates into the artificial Lake, entered the city through its dry passage, and thus subdued the metropolis of the world, and ruined the Chaldean empire. Thrice he carried his victorious army into Lydia, and led the celebrated Crœsus in chains.

But Jesus drank dry the infinite ocean of God’s burning wrath, demolished the strong holds of the devil, overturned the dark empire of hell, and led the monster Death in chains.

Alexander, at the head of his Grecian lions, swam the Granicus, charged an army six times as numerous as his own, and

cut them to pieces. With the rapidity of the leopard he pursues his victory, annihilates a mighty host at the straits of Issus, takes Gaza, Tyre, and Lydon, and at the decisive battle upon the plains of Arbela, subdues the great Persian empire.

But Jesus comes, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills, flying upon the wings of everlasting love; he swims through floods of divine wrath, to rescue sinners from destruction; "*bruises the head of the serpent*," wrests the keys of hell from the hands of the devil, and liberates millions of captive souls from his galling servitude.

These mighty butchers of mankind spread death and destruction wherever they go. But Jesus came upon the most benevolent mission—not to destroy, but to save them. The object of his victories is not to enslave poor rebels, but to redeem them from worse than Egyptian bondage, and bring them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; to make them kings and priests unto God; to put them in possession of a heavenly inheritance—of an exceeding and eternal weight of glory—of joys such as "*eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.*"

The mighty men of this world, with all their power, can only subdue the body; with all their troops and artillery they can never conquer the heart; the mind will be free. But Jesus subdues both soul and body; he changes the disposition of the savage into the meekness and innocence of the lamb.

Let an Austrian or a Spaniard contemplate Bonaparte in all his imperial pomp and grandeur, or in the light of his military power, would this subdue his heart or conquer his enmity? No. It would only incense his hatred and influence his resentment.

The potent monarch may chain their bodies, and force them to submission, but their souls are still unconquerable. But let the most hardened veteran in the devil's camp, whether Pagan, Mahometan, or Atheist, once view the unspeakable glory and beauty of Jesus, and the enmity of his heart is slain; he grounds the arms of his rebellion, and falls an humble penitent at his feet. Yea, could an army numerous as that which Xerxes led across the Hellespont, behold the infinite beauty of the lovely Jesus displayed as one man, they would turn their backs upon their old master, the devil, and fly to the banner of prince Immanuel. And now let us bring forward heroes of a more amiable character: and when compared with our Lord Jesus Christ, they sink into insignificance.

Gustavus Adolphus, of Sweden, the hero and the Christian, the terror of Europe, yet the friend of mankind;—he fought and conquered; but it was for the religion and the liberties of his people. The Duke of Marlboro' slew his thousands and tens of thousands, won battle after battle; but it was in defence

of the Protestant cause against the persecuting house of Bourbon. William III. of England, also fought and conquered, but it was to free a nation from the yoke of a popish tyrant.

We may add the immortal Washington, the patriot and sage, who, aided by the justness of his cause, succeeded in rescuing an infant nation from the yoke of oppression, and in establishing its freedom and independence. But all these great men were obliged to triumph at the expense of the blood of multitudes. Jesus conquers by his own death—though blood must be spilt, it flows from his own streaming wounds—his own bleeding heart. They fought for temporal blessings, for an earthly portion;—he, to procure freedom from sin and hell—to purchase eternal glory and blessedness in Heaven.

Before we dismiss this part of the subject, let us contemplate the last glorious victory, when he tramples all his enemies under his feet—when he casts the devil and all his subjects into the bottomless pit of hell—and lifts all his ransomed followers to the highest summit of glory;—when he will come in the clouds of heaven, in all the pomp and grandeur of the godhead, to judge the world in righteousness. His appearance then will be awfully grand and majestic. He will come surrounded by all his holy angels, with power and great glory. He will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. He will ascend the great white throne in full view of heaven, earth and hell. Saith John: "*Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him.*" Says Daniel: "*I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels of burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.*"

How is he changed! Is this the babe of Bethlehem? the man of sorrow?—the criminal condemned at Pilate's bar, who expired on the cross all covered with wounds and blood?

Now the Deist, who denied his divinity and sneered at his word; lukewarm professors who served him with the forms, without the power of religion; with Pilate, who passed the unjust sentence upon him; and persecuting Jews, who shouted "*Crucify him! Crucify him!*" trembled before him, and, with shrieks that pierce the Heavens, they call upon the rocks, and mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne. The clangor of the last trump is heard throughout heaven, earth and hell.

The Lord of Glory sends his summons forth,
Calls the South nations, and awakes the North.

From East to West his sovereign orders spread,
Through distant worlds and regions of the dead.

The sleeping nations awake. Death and hell give up their dead. The Almighty Conqueror sends his angels to the four winds of heaven, to gather his elect. Not the poorest beggar, or the meanest slave that ever felt the love of Jesus, shall be left. Now Adam and all his posterity, an innumerable multitude, stands upon the earth. The righteous are separated from the wicked. The former with marks of the highest love, are placed on the right hand; while the ungodly and impenitent stand on the left, covered with horror and dismay, awaiting their final doom.— And now the victorious Lord, with a voice sweeter than the music of heaven, welcomes his ransomed followers into the celestial Paradise: “*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,*” Then, with a frown which communicates the hell of hells, with a voice which shakes the universe, and makes the bottomless abyss of damnation tremble to its centre, he passes sentence on the wicked: “*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.*”

II. Conclude by passing a few observations upon the words “**MIGHTY TO SAVE.**”

The many names by which Christ is called in Scripture, are designed to set forth his excellency, and recommend him to the choice of every guilty sinner. Such as, “*Jehovah*”—“*Jesus*”—“*Immanuel*”—“*Christ*”—“*The friend of sinners*”—“*The rock of ages*”—“*The fountain opened*”—“*The tree of life*”—“*The true light*”—“*The day star*”—“*The morning star*”—“*The sun of righteousness*”—“*The hiding place*”—“*The strong hold*”—“*The good shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep.*” But the name used in the text, “*Mighty to save,*” seems to be the aggregate of them all. In it is contained every idea of the being, essence, and attributes of God. It includes Christ in all his mediatorial offices, all rich provisions of the everlasting covenant; in a word, all that is necessary for the salvation of sinners.

First. “*Mighty to save,*” implies that redemption is purchased; that the ransom is paid, and that all things upon God’s part are ready. It also implies that no case is too desperate, too hopeless, for the almighty power, the unbounded goodness of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Hariots, publicans, and thieves, yea, even the murderers of the Son of God—those who spat upon him, scourged, crowned him with thorns, and nailed him to the cross, found pardon for their sins in his blood. Are there any in a more hopeless situation, such need not despair. Jesus is mighty to save. Though your crimes were more numerous, and infinitely more provoking than all the sins that have been pardoned from the beginning of the

world to the present day, yet Jesus bids you welcome. He tells you: "*Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out.*" His blood, like an infinite ocean, is all-sufficient to cleanse you from all the impurities of sin. But, says the distressed sinner, I feel myself ruined and undone, and that there is no hope for me.— Then you are the character his mercy calls. He came to seek and save them that were lost. "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*" But, says the condemned rebel, I have spent my whole life in rebellion against God. I have sinned against light. I have stifled conscience, I have murdered many convictions, and quenched the holy spirit of God. Had I attended to the calls of mercy many years ago, it, might have been well with me; but I fear that it is now too late. Hear the Lord by his prophet: "*Though your sins be as crimson, they shall be as wool; though they be red like scarlet, they shall be white as snow.*"

Though your sins were ten thousand times more aggravating, though you have long provoked the Lord, and have trampled his blood under your feet, yet his pains, his groans, and dying agonies, his streaming wounds, all invite you to come unto him.

The sinner says, I have waited long, have been crying for mercy; but I seem only to grow worse. Others have been released; but no deliverance comes to me. But, friend, Christ has waited much longer upon you; then do not despair. The lame man lay at the pool of Bethesda thirty-eight years, and at last was healed. If you return to sin, you must be lost eternally. Then continue to plead for mercy, and salvation and eternal life shall be given you. Though you are on the brink of ruin, helpless and undone, Jesus is the "*resurrection and the life.*" Though dead, you shall be made alive. Strive not to make yourself better; come just as you are, though blind as Bartemius and dead as Lazarus. Remember Christ is the great physician. He can heal all the maladies of the soul. His encouraging invitation is: "*Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved; for I am God, and there is none else.*"

SERMON III.

ON THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.

For the wages of sin is death.—ROM. vi. 23.

THE design of the Apostle, in the preceding chapter, is to prove the doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ. This being established by the most forcible arguments, he proceeds in this chapter to show, that this doctrine, so far from giving toleration to sin and licentiousness, lays the surest foundation for a life of obedience, and could only be evinced by the fruits of holiness in heart and life; and, therefore, through the whole chapter, he exhorts the people of God to the exercise of self-denial, and mortification, and to a growing progress in the life of sanctification: all of which exercises being the genuine fruits of a justified state, are the only convincing proofs of it, both to the world and to their own consciences.

The Apostle concludes the chapter with two powerful motives, taken from the different consequences resulting from a life of sin and a life of holiness. “*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*”

In the words of the text, we may observe an inseparable connection between sin and death, such as exists between the cause and the effect. Death is here termed the wages of sin, in allusion to the custom of soldiers or servants, who, at the close of their service, receive their reward or full pay. So death, natural and eternal, follows a life spent in sin, as its just desert. The subject naturally divides itself into two ideas, viz: sin and death; therefore we shall,

I. Define Sin, in its nature and tendency.

II. Describe DEATH, which is the consequence of sin.

I. SIN in its nature is a negative. It is not the essence of any being, nor yet essentially the act of any being; but a mode or quality of an action or actions; therefore, the best way to define it is, a violation of the law of God, or a want of conformity to

that law. It is a voluntary refusing to obey the commands of God, or a refusing to choose, love and delight in his law and government; or it is the performing of the commands of God from wrong principles and motives, and to wrong ends; therefore, it must stand in direct opposition to the nature and will of God. So that, with great propriety, it is termed in Scripture, "*The abominable thing that God hates.*"

That there is an infinite evil in sin, will appear, if we consider the nature of the divine law which it violates. The law of God is a transcript of his perfections, or it is a mirror that reflects the image of his moral attributes to the view of all intelligent beings. It is the law of the Creator and Upholder of the Universe, who has an unquestionable right to rule his creatures, and to give them laws for that purpose; and he being infinite in wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, is qualified to rule the universe. To transgress this law, is to cast a reflection upon it as being unreasonable and impracticable; that it is not adapted to the creature's happiness, therefore it must either be foolish or tyrannical. To cast such a reflection upon the law of God, is to insult the Lawgiver himself; as if he were not sufficiently wise to make a law adapted to the best interest of his creatures, or if he knew what was best for them, he had not sufficient goodness to grant it: which last seems evidently contained in the first temptation to sin which man ever embraced; and so far as any man prefers his own choice to the law of God, so far he practically says, that his own will is more fit to direct him than an infinitely wise God; and so far as he complies with the temptations of Satan, so far he declares that the will of a filthy devil is more fit to be the rule of his conduct, than the will of the glorious, good and all-wise Governor of the Universe.

Again, viewing the law as a transcript of the moral perfections of God, and conformity to it enforced with a penalty. The language of every sin is, that it is better to forfeit all the good which God can bestow, and risk all the evil which his wrath can inflict, than to be conformed to such a being. When we consider that the glory of God, which is thus dishonored, is infinite, then there must be an infinite evil in sin. For, although no act of a finite creature can have infinite dignity or demerit, arising from the agent considered separately, and the obedience of a finite creature, though perfect, cannot receive infinite worth from the infinitude of the being obeyed, so even a perfect creature cannot be said to love or delight in more glory than he can in some degree apprehend; consequently, as he cannot apprehend God, his love and delight must fall short of being adequate to his infinite glory. But sin being a despising and rejecting of the whole Deity, both what is apprehended of him, and what is not,

therefore it casts the highest possible dishonor upon infinite glory, and there must be an infinite evil in sin.

But again, as there is an infinite evil in sin, so also in its tendency it is calculated to destroy the whole creation of God. Yea, such is its infinite malignity, that it naturally tends to unhinge the divine law, to destroy the moral government of the universe, and to introduce disorder and ruin through all the works of God. In short, sin aims at nothing less than to extinguish the divine glory, to undeify the Deity, to deprive him of his being, and, finally, to annihilate the source and essence of all happiness.

Jehovah, who is the author and fountain of all being, is infinitely and essentially glorious, lovely and excellent in all his perfections, which render him worthy of the love, esteem and adoration of all his intelligent creatures; and his happiness consists in the contemplation of his own infinite glory.

Now, if the happiness of God consists in contemplating his infinite glory, and in the enjoyment of his adorable attributes, it plainly follows, that the true happiness of all his creatures must consist in a knowledge of his perfections, and in a perfect conformity to his nature; and the divine law, which sin despises and rejects, is a complete and perfect copy of all his moral perfections, which, like a mirror, reflects his glory to the view of all his rational creatures. But sin aims at nothing less than the destruction and annihilation of this law; and if the true happiness of intelligent creatures consists in a perfect conformity to it, then sin naturally tends to destroy and annihilate their happiness, and its infernal purpose is their ruin and perdition.

But plain matters of fact, the most convincing of all proofs, illustrate this truth. What hurled archangels and bright shining seraphs from the heaven of heavens to the bottomless burning lake of hell? It was sin. Their happiness consisted in perfect holiness and conformity to the divine law. But sin stripped them of all their primeval beauty and blessedness, and changed them into filthy devils; it changed their shouts and loud hallelujahs into shrieks, and groans, and yells, and horrid, hellish blasphemies. What debased and sullied the beauty of this world? It was sin;—as Dr. Watts expresseth it, “Sin, that cursed name, in one hour spoiled six days’ labor of a God.” What stripped Adam of his primeval rectitude and purity? What robbed him of his happiness, and drew the image of the Devil upon his heart? It was sin. One fatal act of sin ruined him, and all his unborn race, and deluged the whole habitable globe with mischief, misery and ruin. What transformed the beloved creature man, the darling of his Maker, and the governor of the lower world, into a child of wrath, a slave to his lusts, and a drudge to the devil? It was sin, that, like a deadly plague, or malignant and mortal

contagion, has filled the earth with deceit and wickedness, blood-shed and violence, misery and woe, destruction and death, and has turned an earthly Paradise into an emblem of hell.

But let us notice the infernal malignity, or as the Apostle Paul expresses it, "*the exceeding sinfulness of sin.*"

1st. Sin. Every sin contains in it the most glaring injustice, robbery and villany. Mankind, in a Christless state, seem to have no idea of sin but what affects civil society, or injures their fellow men; hence they admit that falsehood, slander, defrauding and murder is sin. But sins against God, or a violation of the first table of the divine law, such as profaning the Sabbath, taking the name of God in vain, living without prayer, or loving the world and the things of it more than God;—these they consider innocent and harmless. They suppose that the Eternal God is some foolish, simple, easy being, who will suffer his law and government to be insulted and treated with contempt, without even resenting it; or else they suppose he is filthy, depraved, like themselves, and will connive at their sin and take no notice of their wickedness. Hence they pride themselves on their morality, their equity and uprightness; they imagine that they are honest men and good citizens, when in reality they are more guilty of villany and injustice, in the sight of God, than the most flagrant horse-thief, or house-robber, in the view of the respectable members of the community. Justice, according to its strictest definition, is a rendering to every one his due. With respect to our fellow men, it requires us to render to superiors that honor and obedience which is due to their dignity and station;—with respect to our inferiors, it requires us to fulfill every duty we owe to them, in the relation they stand towards us;—with respect to our equals, that we do to them, in all things, as we would have them do unto us. But if justice is a rendering to every one his due, what are we bound to render God, the Sovereign of the Universe, our Creator, Preserver, and kind Benefactor? The divine law lays in its claim, and tells you, that it demands our whole hearts, affections, life and being. "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.*" But sin, in the most base, unjust and villainous manner, robs God of all this; for—

1st. He claims as his due the whole heart, the supreme love and the warmest affections of the soul: but of this sin robs him. The sinner loves himself infinitely more than he does his Maker. He loves the world and its sinful pleasures infinitely more than he does the God of heaven; these things engross his whole time and attention, while the thought of God seldom, if ever, enters into his mind:—and is not this unjust in the highest degree?

2d. He created man; he gave him his being; and he preserves him in being; he loads him with the bounties of his kind providence;—therefore he claims his obedience, praise and adoration. But the sinner wickedly and obstinately refuses to obey his commands; he serves himself, the world and the Devil, and he rejects the law of God as the most tyrannical yoke. Is not this robbery, to all intents and purposes?

3d. He demands one day in seven as his unquestionable right; he claims every moment of it as his own;—he commands his rational creatures to sanctify it and keep it holy, for the purpose of his worship and service; he requires them to spend it in such a manner as not to do their own works, speak their own words, think their own thoughts, nor seek their own pleasure. But the sinner obstinately refuses to render to God his right. He spends the Sabbath doing his own works, speaking his own words, thinking his own thoughts, and seeking his own pleasure; in a word, he spends it as a day of feasting, visiting, vain amusements, and carnal conversation.

Again, sin contains the highest species of treason against the Sovereign of the Universe. The sinner usurps the throne of God, instead of loving him with his whole heart. Instead of making the will of God the rule of his happiness, he is ruled by his own will. Instead of making the glory of God the object of all his actions, he makes his own interest, profit, or pleasure, the chief end of his conduct. It contains the highest species of whoredom. A jealous God requires the whole heart, soul, body and spirit, to be kept pure for himself; but the sinner rejects his God, banishes him from his heart, and places his affections on the world and the cares of it, and on the gratification of his filthy lusts and appetites; hence the Lord complains of sinners as of a wife, who has treacherously departed from her husband: “so have ye dealt treacherously with me.”

Sin also contains the most base ingratitude; hence God himself declares, that the conduct of sinners is more ungenerous than that of the irrational brute; and he calls upon the inanimate creation to stand amazed, and be struck with horror at their actions: “*Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know me; my people doth not consider.*” The man who would abuse the unmerited favors of a kind benefactor, turn his enemy, and treat him with contempt, would be esteemed by society as meaner than the brute. The child who would basely spit in the face of his father, who had tenderly raised him from infancy; who would disobey all his commands, and on all occasions treat his person and character with contempt, would be considered a monster in human shape. But this bears no compa-

rison to the baseness and infernal malignity of that ingratitude to God, which is contained in the smallest sin. He is the fountain of every perfection, and the author of our existence; he created us intelligent beings, capable of knowing him and of contemplating his glory; he provides for, protects and preserves us, and loads us with the kind blessings of his providence; he pitied us in our fallen state; he gave his son, his only and well beloved son, to spill the last drop of his blood, that the price of our ransom might be paid. The heart of man cannot conceive, nor the tongue of an archangel express, the infinite obligations we are under to love and serve him. But sin, in its nature, spits the venom, malice and contempt of a devil in the very face of God. It does what it can to sink the character and dignity of the Most High into reproach and ridicule. It tramples upon his government; and had it strength equal to its malignity, it would dethrone the ALMIGHTY and deprive him of existence.

Sin contains the highest degree of unbelief. This reflects the highest dishonor upon God. It gives the lie to all his promises and threatenings. God declares that "*sin is an infinite evil;*" "*the abominable thing that he hates;*" "*that he is of purer eyes than to behold it;*" and that "*he cannot look upon iniquity.*" But the sinner, by his conduct, says, God is a liar; sin is a pleasant, harmless thing; there is no harm in profaning the Sabbath in a civil frolic, nor in a genteel ball; none in a horse race, a civil game at cards, dice, or billiards; none in blaspheming the name of God, especially if I am in a passion, nor in taking a hearty drink of grog in a tavern, and in being lively in wicked company.

God declares that the sinner out of Christ is his enemy by wicked works; that "*the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;*" that "*every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil, only evil continually;*" that "*out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, coveteousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.*" But the sinner says, God lies; I have a good heart, much better than many who pray and pretend to a great deal of religion; I bear malice against none; I am always willing to relieve the distressed: it is true, I swear an oath occasionally, particularly when I am insulted; I sometimes take a drink of grog, but I never get more than gentlemanly drunk; I attend balls, and sometimes take a hand at cards; I love the best end of a bargain, and so does every man; if I cheat my neighbor in the swap of a horse, he had the half of the bargain to make, and he would have cheated me, had he been as smart as I—and there is no harm in these practices; the best characters in our country do such things.

God declares that we must be converted, or be forever damned; that we must be born again, or never enter the kingdom of heaven. But the sinner by his conduct says, God is a liar; I expect to be happy after death, but I do not wish to be saved in that way; I believe the Bible, too—at least, I suppose that some of it is true; but I cannot bear the idea of conversion and sensible experience; I cannot put up with the notion of feeling the love of God shed abroad in the heart, or of being happy in Christ—this looks so much like enthusiasm and weakness of mind; I despise the method of obtaining religion which God points out in the Bible; I expect to be saved in a better way;—I am for a rational religion, altogether upon philosophical principles, with very little praying and no feeling, one that will take along with it the sinful pleasures of the world, at least upon a polite scale, and that will not expose me to contempt, reproach and persecution, but which will be popular among the polite and respectable members of society.

God declares that "*the wages of sin is death,*" and that all who live in sin and die out of Christ, shall have their portion in the lake "*that burneth with fire and brimstone.*" But the sinner joins with that old serpent, the Devil, and says, God is a liar. Says one, I don't believe there is a hell; God would be a tyrant, indeed, were he to punish me to all eternity for the few foibles, blunders, and innocent amusements of my life. Says another, I do not know certainly that there is a hell—this is a matter on which I have not much reflected; but I have done nothing worthy of eternal punishment: I have never committed murder. Says another, I acknowledge that I am not a Christian, yet I do not believe that I will go to hell; I have committed some bad actions, but I have also performed many good ones. Says another, God is very merciful, therefore he will not send me to hell. Now all these persons give the God of truth the lie to his face.

But sin, death, and hell, are as inseparably connected as the cause and effect; and this brings us,

2d. To describe death, which is the consequence of sin.

God, as the Sovereign of the Universe, possesses the right of governing his creatures; for he is infinitely fit to rule and direct them agreeably to his will and pleasure; and he has given them a law for that purpose, designed by his wisdom and goodness, to promote the happiness of his creatures, to manifest the glory of his attributes, and preserve the order and harmony of the universe. Then it must naturally follow, that the law must have a penalty annexed to it, in order to prevent disobedience, disorder and confusion among those who are governed; and this penalty must be such as will be in proportion to the nature of the offence, and to the greatness and glory of the person offended.

We have already proven that sin is an infinite evil; then it follows that it merits nothing less than infinite punishment, which can only be inflicted upon a finite creature by pain of an eternal duration. In the text, the penalty of sin is summed up in the word *death*: “*The wages of sin is death.*” This was the penalty annexed to the law, when it was given to our first parents, in their state of innocence: “*In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*” Now this death comprehends,

1. Natural death, which is a penal evil, and consists in the separation of the soul from the body.

2. Spiritual death, which is the separation of the soul from God.

3. Eternal death, or as it is emphatically termed, the second death; which is the everlasting separation of both soul and body from God, and from the glory of his presence. Death, in this complex sense, is the death expressed in the text, and which is inseparably connected with sin; and this death includes an everlasting exclusion from all possible good, and the infliction of all possible evil.

1st. It contains the loss of God, the source of all happiness, the loss of heaven, of the society of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; of all means of salvation, and of all hope.

2d. It implies that the malignant enmity of the sinner’s heart against God, with every infernal temper of the soul, shall be ripened into horrid, hellish perfection, so that their natures will be as perfectly unlike to God and contrary to him, as it is possible for the hellish wickedness of a devil to be, to the pure, immaculate holiness of God.

3d. It includes the horrible society of devils and damned ghosts, where all the moral filth and pollution of the world are collected together, and where guilty sinners, who die out of Christ, through all eternity shall enjoy no better society than that of filthy and despairing fiends.

4th. This death includes in it all the pains of hell. Do you ask what is hell? Without attempting to gratify a vain curiosity, I will refer you to what God has said concerning it in his holy word, and there it is termed, “*The second death*”—“*The blackness of darkness*”—“*The place of torment*”—“*Hell fire*”—“*Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*”—“*The bottomless pit*”—“*A Lake of fire*”—“*The vengeance of eternal fire*”—“*A lake of fire burning with brimstone*”—“*Tophet ordained of old, the pile whereof is much wood, and the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.*”

The word of God expressly declares, that “*sinners are cast into this lake of fire; that they endure the vengeance of eternal fire, where they have not a drop of water to cool their parched*

tongues; that they see the people of God afar off, enjoying the happiness of heaven, while they are separated from them by an impassable gulf; that they drink the wine of the wrath of God, poured into the cup of his indignation, without mixture; that the smoke of their torment ascendeth forever and ever, and they have no rest, day nor night." All these are only figurative terms; therefore they afford but a faint view of the torments of hell, for the strongest figure bears no proportion to the thing represented by it. The types and sacrifices under the Jewish dispensation, were expressive figures of Christ and his salvation. A city, with walls of precious stone, gates of pearl, and streets of gold, is a figure of the glory of the heavenly state; so a "bottomless pit," or a "lake of fire, burning with brimstone," is but a figure of hell. Therefore we conclude, that as far as the salvation purchased by the blood of Christ excels the dark types and shadows of the Mosaic dispensation; as far as the infinite glories of heaven exceed a material city, with walls of precious stones and streets of gold, so far do the pains of hell exceed the torments of a deathless human soul and body, confined in a lake of fire burning with brimstone. As "*eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love him;*" so it is equally impossible in the present state, to form just conceptions of the torments of hell, which are prepared by a holy God for impenitent sinners. We shall suppose that all the pains and torments that ever were endured, by all the human bodies which ever existed upon the earth, were inflicted on one person; add to this ten thousand times the horror endured by Spira, yet all this would not bear the same comparison to the torments of the damned in hell, that the scratch of a pin will do to a sword run through a man's vitals.

Again. View, if you please, the structure of the universe; examine the globe we inhabit, with her continents, islands, rocks and mountains; her oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers, and the innumerable variety of her inhabitants and vegetable productions; view the fixed stars, and planetary systems, their magnitude, the order and harmony of their motions;—and then say how boundless that wisdom, how omnipotent that power, which gave being to all these mighty systems. Then, I would ask, what must that hell be, which is brought into existence by the same infinitely wise and powerful Creator? How dreadful, beyond the comprehension of even angelic minds, must the torments of hell be, when the omnipotent and omniscient Jehovah makes his power known upon the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction!

But what is still more dreadful, that which constitutes the essence of hell, the very emphasis of damnation, is, its eternal duration. They go away into everlasting punishment, where the worm dieth not, where the fire is not quenched, and the

smoke of their torment ascendeth forever and ever, and where they have no rest, day nor night. When they have spent ten thousand times ten thousand ages sinking in a bottomless hell, their torments will be but begun.

Suppose that a small bird, at the end of every century, were to take from our globe a particle of dust, until the whole were carried off, and then that the damned were to be released from the torments of hell; this would afford some relief: but the pains of hell shall never end. To use the striking words of the pious Erskine, the language of the damned sinner will be:

"Infinite years in torment must I spend,
And never, never, never at an end!
O, must I lie in torturing despair,
As many years as atoms in the air!"

But there is an ingredient in this death, which is the consequence of sin, that renders it, if possible, still more dreadful than all that has been mentioned. It is this,—their torment will be a growing torment; their misery will be an increasing misery. As vessels of wrath, they will be forever growing more capacious, and forever full of the pure and unmixed wrath of a sin-avenging God. Though in the infernal regions, they will still be rational creatures; as such, they will continue under the law of God, and as justly liable to punishment for violating that law in hell, as for a breach of it while upon the earth; and as their enmity against God will be ripened to the most horrid perfection in hell, they will be eternally sinning, gnawing their tongues with infernal pain, and uttering the most dreadful blasphemies against God; therefore their bonds will be forever strengthening, and their misery forever increasing.

S E R M O N I V.

PARABLE OF THE DRY BONES.

He said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O LORD GOD, thou knowest.—EZEKIEL xxxvii. 3.

In this chapter we have a very tragical description of human misery, in its most hopeless and helpless condition, illustrated by one of the most strikingly significant figures, viz: the state of the dry bones lying in heaps, or scattered abroad upon the open field, drying and wasting away by the influence of the sun, rains and wind.

Here we have also a most sublime exhibition of the almighty power and grace of God, in quickening the dry bones and changing them into an exceeding great army of living men.

The scene is in the Valley of Dry Bones, where the Prophet had been carried in vision by the Spirit of God.

The bloody fields where Alexander, Cæsar, Tamerlane, and other heroes fought; where thousands, or perhaps hundreds of thousands lay dead, may remind us of the Valley of Dry Bones. Suppose the dead bodies of these slaughtered multitudes to have remained unburied, their flesh devoured by the fowls of the air and by the wild beasts of the forest, lying for many years upon the surface of the earth, mouldering and wasting away; how affecting would this sight be to the feelings of humanity, and how impossible, upon the principles of reason, for them ever again to appear an army of living men.

This affecting parabolical description, literally applies to the state of the Jews, probably in their deplorable condition since their dispersion, which took place at the destruction of Jerusalem, when they were driven from their own country by the Roman army commanded by Titus Vespasian; since that period they have been scattered to the four winds, and dispersed among all nations of the earth.

With great propriety, the subject may be accommodated to the condition of unconverted sinners, comprising many millions of the human race who are spiritually dead, and on the brink of hell. In this view the Valley of Dry Bones represents the world at large, which every where abounds with spiritually dead souls; hence it is almost impossible to find a family, in this land of gospel light, where there is not a spiritually dead soul. Alas! we often find whole families and neighborhoods, in an unconverted state.

When we consider the nature of sin and the influence and extent of spiritual death, natural death, or even the state of the dry bones, in the Valley of Vision, affords but a faint emblem of the miserable and helpless condition of spiritually dead sinners. Consequently, the preaching of the word, and the highest exertions of mortals, can no more awaken a sinner from a state of spiritual death, than a human voice by its own energy can call a dead corpse from the grave, or quicken the dry bones in the Valley of Vision, and change them into an exceeding great army of living men. Nothing less than the breath of the Lord can quicken the dry bones; and nothing short of that Almighty voice, which spake worlds into being, can convert the sinner, changing the temper and disposition of hell into the spirit of Christ.

In the prosecution of the subject we shall pass some reflections on each particular in the parable.

Saith the Prophet: "*The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about, and, behold! there were very many in the open valley, and, lo! they were very dry.*"

As has been observed, the dry bones constitute a very significant figure of spiritually dead souls. The valley was full of dry bones—"there were very many;" so the world is full of spiritually dead souls. The prophet Micah compares the righteous to "*the grape gleanings of the vintage;*" that is, to the few scattering grapes left behind after the frugal and industrious husbandman has carefully gathered in his crop. The Lord Jesus Christ declares, that "*strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*" And this melancholy truth is clearly proved by plain matters of fact. Were the inhabitants of the earth divided into thirty parts, we would have nineteen parts Pagan, six Jewish and Mahomedan, and five professing Christianity, including Papists, Protestants, and the members of the Greek Church; the professed Christians being in proportion to the rest of the world as five to twenty-five. View even the small county of Henderson, and how few, comparatively, can tell what God has done for their souls; how very

few can feel the witness of the Word and Spirit of God, that they have a right to a seat at the communion table. The bones were very dry—what a clear evidence of the certainty of natural death; and these dry bones are but a faint representation of that spiritual death, of which unconverted souls are the subjects.

1st. The privation of action in a natural sense, is a negative evidence of death, and this evidence the unconverted sinner hath in a spiritual sense: for he is destitute of all motion towards God; he has no disposition to obey his holy commands; he has no desire to pray in secret, nor in his family; he hates the Bible above all other books, and to read and study it, he esteems a most intolerable task; he has no disposition to commune with his own heart, nor to think and converse about the eternal state, and the great business of his soul's salvation.

2d. The want of breath is a plain evidence of the privation of life. The Christless sinner has this evidence of spiritual death: for he has no breathings after a transformation into the image of God; he has no longings of soul after communion with him, and no sweet believing views of his glory as it shines in the face of Jesus; he is ignorant of God, and he can form no just conceptions of the nature of spiritual life.

3d. The want of animal heat is an evidence of the privation of animal life; and the sinner has no warmth of affection after God, and things spiritual; he tastes no sweetness in perusing the scriptures, and in conversing with God by prayer; he is a total stranger to communion with him, and he has no zeal for his glory and the advancement of his kingdom on the earth.

4th. The want of sensation is also an evidence of natural death; and the unconverted sinner has this evidence of spiritual death. You may beat a dead man; you may cut his flesh from his bones, but he will not feel it; it will afflict him no more than it would a rock. Just so it is with the unconverted sinner; he is destitute of spiritual sensation, and his heart is as hard as the nether millstone. Talk to him of the propriety and necessity of embracing religion, and of leading a life of holiness, and he hears you with as much indifference as if you were conversing of the affairs of some foreign country, in which he is not at all concerned. He may assent to the truth of what you say, but he treats it as a matter of no moment, and in which he is not interested. Preach to sinners the most solemn soul-searching sermons; describe to them the state of their souls; point out the eternal misery that awaits them without repentance; and they will adopt the language of the men of Sodom to Lot, saying: "*It is the voice of one mocking.*" When the minister of Jesus, with bleeding heart, lays before them their danger, and with vehemence and importunity urges them to flee the wrath to come,—

O, say they, this is too much! He is offended—he is trying to frighten us. Does he think we are fools?

In a word, could you uncover the bottomless pit of hell; could you show them the fiery billows of God's wrath, rolling in impetuous floods, and falling in eternal storms; display to them the shrieks, groans and yells of devils and damned ghosts, sinking beneath the fury of God; and alas! they sleep on. All these dreadful realities affect them no more than the whistling of the wind, or the rattling of a drum. As Rutherford says, "Were Dives to come up from the infernal gulf, flaming and blazing with the fire of hell; were he to show to sinners the marks and scars he had received from the lashes of the devil's scorpions;—yea, were he to bring up the red coals of God's wrath, as large as mountains, yet all this would not move or awaken one soul, unless the mighty power of God were exerted." Indeed, could a rueful ghost come reeking out of hell, with the fire visible upon him, the stench of brimstone about him, and exhibit the flames in his bosom, and then with all the anguish which becomes his state, and with all the earnestness to which a sense of the pains of hell can raise him, let him tell all his wretched experience, and, if possible, speak all he felt; let him bewail himself in their presence, tearing his hair and gnashing his teeth; let him weep and wail and beseech them in tears and passion; and when he has ended his amazing mission, as he descends into the divided earth, let them view the flames of the pit flashing through the dreadful chasm; yet all this would not cause one sinner to repent.

Hitherto we have stated only the negative evidences of a state of death, viz: want of motion, breath, heat and sensation. In the Valley of Vision, the bones were scattered over the plain, stript of flesh, and wasting away; the marrow dried up, and all moisture gone; the bones of different persons mixed together; the skulls frequently handled by curious observers; the legs and arms lifted up by eagles, or dragged off and devoured by beasts of prey. All these are clear evidences of a state of death.

So Christless sinners have not only the evidences of the privation of spiritual life, but they have, also, the most dreadful symptoms of spiritual death, in its fullest extent. This death contains not only the want of original righteousness, and of holy principles and dispositions, but it also includes positive wickedness, and enmity against God and his ways; hence they are said to be "*enemies to God by wicked works.*" The Psalmist, speaking of the total depravity of the human race, says: "*They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good; no, not one.*"

The soul, in Scripture, is called the heart, because the soul is to the whole man what the heart is to the body: the heart is the spring of all the motions of animal life, and the soul is the source

of all spiritual action. From it proceed all depravity and wickedness; hence it is termed "*an uncircumcised heart*"—"*a stony heart*"—"*a heart set to evil*"—"*a froward heart*"—"*a perverse heart*"—"*a whorish, idolatrous heart*"—"*a heart departing from God*"—"*a rebellious heart*"—"*a heart full of iniquity*." The Lord Jesus Christ says: "*Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, coveteousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.*" This is the description given, by the God of heaven, of the heart of every unregenerate sinner; therefore all their thoughts, words and actions, must be sin. "*For a polluted fountain cannot send forth pure water; figs cannot grow upon thorns, nor grapes upon thistles.*" Hence, in Proverbs it is said, "*the ploughing of the wicked is sin;*" that is, as every action they perform, proceeds from a deceitful and wicked heart, which is enmity against God, must be an act of rebellion against him, and if this be the case, it follows, that the spiritually dead sinner can no more change his heart, than the dry bones in the valley can reanimate themselves and rise from the dead. Jeremiah confirms this important doctrine. "*Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots; then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*" Hence the propriety of our God's declaration, "*No man can come to me except the Father, who sent me, draw him;*" and that of the Apostle Paul, "*What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead?*" Therefore, we conclude that the work of regeneration is a new creation or resurrection from the dead; for the breath of the Lord alone can reanimate souls in a state of spiritual death.

But here a question arises, viz: If this be the condition of the unconverted sinner, what must he do? Is it his duty to sit still and wait God's time? I answer, No. To do this, is just to go on in sin, and persist in hostile rebellion against God. It is the will of God that the sinner should try to forsake his sins, and as a guilty, condemned criminal, fall at the footstool of sovereign mercy, crying for pardon.

Here we have taken another dreadful evidence of the second death; for the sinner will rather risk eternal death and damnation, than use the smallest exertions to flee the wrath to come. He will confess that he is a sinner, and destitute of an interest in Christ; but he will rather risk the torments of hell than attend to the work of his soul's salvation.

The prophet having passed round the bones in the valley and carefully examined them, the Lord asks him the question: "*Son of man, can these bones live?*" According to the laws of nature, the prophet views their reanimation as impossible; his only

hope was founded on the omnipotence of God; therefore he answers: "*O Lord God, thou knowest;*" as if he should say, all created power is insufficient, but thou canst do it. The Lord said to the prophet: "*Propesy unto these dry bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God, unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and ye shall live; and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*"

God works by means, therefore the prophet must prophesy to the dry bones, before he will exert his almighty power. In just such circumstances the ministers of the gospel must preach to spiritually dead sinners, and beseech them to be reconciled to God; and without the exertion of God's almighty power, we might as well stand in a common grave yard, and call upon the dead corpses, rotting in the earth, to come forth and act like living men.

Saith the prophet: "*I prophesied as I was commanded.*"—And, poor Christless sinners! in the same solemn manner I address you to-day. *O YE DRY BONES, hear the word of the Lord!* Ye spiritually dead souls, hear the word of God! The arms of an infinite God are stretched out; his mercy cries after you; his bowels yearn with compassion over you; the tender heart of Jesus pities you; and every drop of blood that flows from his veins, invite you. "*The spirit and the bride say, Come.—And let him that heareth, say, Come. Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him come.*"

The prophet proceeds to give us a very pleasing relation. "*As I prophesied there was a noise, and, behold, a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone; and when I beheld, lo! the sinews and the flesh came up upon them and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.*"

When the mighty power of God came upon the dry bones, there was a noise and a shaking; and when the spirit of God accompanies the preaching of the word, there is a mighty shaking among unconverted sinners. We are told that when Christ came into the house, "*he could not be hid;*" and when he comes into an unconverted family, congregation or neighborhood, he cannot be hid; a strange and uncommon work takes place, which excites the wonder and astonishment of all who witness it: poor, careless and prayerless sinners, become serious and deeply impressed with a sense of eternity and eternal things. Now they are to be seen weeping over their wretched condition, crying for mercy, and inquiring of ministers and experienced Christians, what they must do to be saved. Now they forsake their former companions in sin, their beloved lusts and wicked practices. When they are under the sound of the gos-

pel, they hear as for the life of their souls, and wrestle for eternal life. They warn their unconverted companions and relations of their fearful condition, while in a Christless state; and they plead with them to flee the wrath to come. Their conduct excites the astonishment of unthinking men, many of whom style them fools or hypocrites, and every stratagem is used to entice them into their former sinful ways.

When sinners are savingly converted, and taste the sweetness of the love of Christ, O how they love, wonder and adore!—They feel as though they were in a new world. They tell their Christian friends what a precious Christ, and sweet salvation they have found. With tears in their eyes they tell their unconverted friends, in the language of heaven, what a beauty and fulness they see in the fair and lovely face of Jesus, and how willing he is to save all that come unto God by him. Such language often alarms the wicked, and strikes more pungent conviction into their hearts, than all the preaching they have ever heard.

But here it should be observed, there is a work preparatory to regeneration, which must necessarily precede it, yet is no part of its essence. As in Elijah's vision, "*a great and strong wind rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice;*" and the Lord was there. So in the parable, we are told, "*there was a noise, and, behold, a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them;*" therefore they were still in a state of death. And, in a spiritual sense, when the mighty power of God begins to move upon the dry bones, the sinner is awakened, and alarmed at his situation; he forsakes his sins and wicked companions; he associates with the people of God; prays in secret and in his family; regularly attends the preaching of the gospel; and a visible change takes place in all his conduct. Still, however, he is in a state of spiritual death. The spirit of God discovers to him the hidden wickedness of his heart, and his total inability to think a good thought, or command a holy desire. Now the sinner weeps and mourns over his miserable condition; with vigor he opposes the horrid current of sin and inbred corruption. When he prays, he tries to do it with his whole heart; when he hears the gospel preached, he labors to be affected with the importance of divine truth; but still he is destitute of spiritual breath. The spirit of God discovers to him that his whole nature is sin, and that his best performances and desires are but dross and dung; and now he struggles for eternal life, as a drowning man for relief, and

cries for mercy as a condemned criminal for a pardon: but still he is in a state of death. But the Holy Spirit sinks the dart of conviction deeper into his heart, and convinces him of his unbelief and utter helplessness; and now he feels himself as unable to believe, or come to Christ, as a dead body rotting in the grave is incapable of quickening itself. At times all hopes of mercy seem to be gone; again he has a peradventure the Lord may be gracious. At one time a small ray of hope breaks into his mind, and again dismal clouds of midnight darkness surround him on every side. The arrows of the Almighty stick fast in his heart, and their poison drinks up his spirits. The pains of hell take hold of him with a fearful looking for of judgment. In a word, the distress of his soul is such, that none but those who have felt it can describe. See him falling at the feet of sovereign mercy, dead to all hope in himself, and stripped of all self dependence; making his last resolve, that, if he should be damned, it will be trying to look to Jesus.

Now, like the dry bones when, "*the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them*," all that is necessary, is, the breath of spiritual life: and in this condition neither men nor angels can help him. All that ministers or Christians can do for him, is, to address him in the language of Moses to the Israelites, when at the Red Sea, they were pursued by Pharaoh's mighty army: "*Stand still, and see the salvation of God.*"

"*Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.*" This prophesying to the four winds, seems expressive of the travailing pangs of Zion, when every praying soul is wrestling with God, by laying hold of his word and promise, vehemently groaning and agonizing in the spirit.

The prophet proceeds: "*So I prophesied as I was commanded. and the breath came upon them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.*" When Jesus Christ, by whom the worlds were made, and at whose voice the raging billows of the sea were stilled, speaks the word of life to the spiritually dead sinner; when he unveils to him his beauty, fulness and all-sufficiency; then the dawn of eternal life springs up in his soul, and his dreadful load of sin and guilt is washed away, and lost in the Red Sea of redeeming blood;—then his heart is filled with the peace of God, and he experiences "*joy unspeakable and full of glory.*" But what language can express, or what figures illustrate the wonders of this astonishing change? Suppose that the earth were surrounded with the most impenetrable darkness, and in a moment the sun, in meridian brightness, darts his rays from pole to pole, and deluges the world with light; this would be but a faint shadow of that

light which darts into the soul of the pardoned sinner. Now, the language of his heart, and also often of his lips, is, Wonder! wonder! wonder! Glory! glory! glory! Hallelujah! O what a beauty, what an excellency I see in Jesus. The tongue of an Archangel cannot describe his loveliness. O what an infinite fulness I see in Jesus, for every guilty sinner who will come to God by him. Had I ten thousand souls, I would give them all to Jesus. Had I ten thousand lives, they would *all* be devoted to him. I feel as if I were in a new world. All nature shines forth the glory of God. His precious word, how sweet it is; yea, it is sweeter than honey and the honey-comb. O that I could love him more, that I was more like him. O that I could fly to heaven and dwell forever with him there.

Sweet was the hour, the minutes sweet
When my beloved me did meet,
His love to evidence:
My heart, that wounded was before,
Kindly he bound, therein he did pour
Love's healing quintessence.

Sweet was the feast my heart enjoyed,
I ate—I drank—nor was I cloyed,
For more I thirsted still.
Here let me stay, I longing prayed,
Sure this is Achor's Vale, I said,
Or Holy Tabor Hill.

The Red Sea then he did divide,
And quelled the mighty tyrant's pride,
And broke his chariot strong.
Thinking he would assail no more,
I thought I was safe on shore,
I sung the Hebrews' song.

I sung assured of Jesus' love,
Refreshed with manna from above,
For flesh no more I cried;
Warmed by the sun's enlivening beams,
I laid me down by Shiloh's streams,
Content and satisfied.

S E R M O N V.

THE SURE FOUNDATION.

Upon one stone shall be seven eyes.—ZACHARIAH iii. 9.

THE book of Zachariah was written shortly after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity; perhaps about the time when Zerubbabel and Joshua were authorized to begin the building of the temple. At this period the church of God was emerging from a state of desolation and distress. Although God had hid his face from his people for a moment, yet, in great mercy he was now returning for their deliverance. In this chapter the distressed state of the church or Jewish nation, and their gracious deliverance, are represented under the type of Joshua, the high priest. As the administration of the rites and ceremonies of that church were committed to him, therefore he is taken for its typical representative. In the first and second verses it is said: “*And he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*” This, no doubt, points out the believing Jews undertaking to build the second temple, and earnestly seeking the blessing of God, while Satan appears as their adversary and accuser, uses malicious endeavors to discourage them from their work, and oppose them by Sanballat, and other instruments of the same kind. In the third, fourth, and fifth verses it is said; “*Now Joshua was clothed in filthy garments, and stood before the angel, and he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre on his head; so they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments.*”

The filthy garments are emblematical of the sinfulness of Joshua and his people, and the miseries they endured; but these are all removed, by causing their iniquities to pass from them, and by restoring them to the favor of God. The fair mitre, set upon the head of Joshua, may signify that the Jews should again enjoy the privileges peculiar to their church, and that the ordinances of God's house should be administered in their former purity. In the eight verse it is said: "*Hear now, O Joshua, the high priest, these and thy fellows that sit before thee, for they are men wondered at; for behold, I will bring forth my servant, The Branch;*" that is, they are called upon to view the sure foundation on which the hopes of their temporal and eternal salvation are built, viz. Christ, who is here called God's servant. As God, he is the Father's equal; but as mediator, he is the servant whom God hath sent into the world, to finish the work he gave him to do. He is termed **THE BRANCH**, in reference to his incarnation, as he was born of a woman and sprung from the root of Jesse; for although he is David's Creator and Lord, yet he is his son according to the flesh. This is the rock of ages, the precious corner-stone upon which God has laid the everlasting salvation of his people. "*Behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua. Upon one stone shall be seven eyes.*" In these words,

1st. We have a figure by which the stability of the merits and mediation of Christ is pointed out; he is the foundation of his people's faith, and is justly compared to a stone, which, of all other materials, is most durable.

2d. We have something extraordinary predicated of this metaphor: "*Upon one stone shall be seven eyes.*" This points out the omniscience of Jesus, his continual care of his people, or the wonders of his person, incarnation, and mediation, which attract the attention and admiration of angels and men.

In further attending to the words, we shall,

I. Show in what respects Christ may be compared to a stone.

II. What is said of this stone.

I. Show in what respects Christ may be compared to a stone.

1st. A stone is always chosen as the most permanent foundation of every building; so Christ, the second person of the adorable Trinity, is the sure foundation upon which God has laid the eternal concerns of his glory.

When Adam and all his race fell into a state of sin and misery, had the question been proposed, How can fallen man be redeemed from his ruined condition, and the perfections of Jehovah glorified in his salvation? the question would have silenced all the heavenly host. Had Gabriel been chosen as the corner-stone of this new building, its infinite weight would have sunk him to the bottom of hell. No created being could have endur-

ed the wrath of God due to the sins of the whole elect world, or have borne the stroke of the sword of divine justice. But the wisdom of God found out a way of escape for poor lost sinners, and lays help upon one "*mighty to save.*" "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"

This is the corner-stone on which God has laid all the concerns of his glory, as it respects the salvation of an elect world. "*Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone—a tried stone—a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.*" Peter styles him, "*a chief corner-stone, elect, precious.*"

He is a tried stone. He was tried to the utmost, and he stood the test. This stone was cast into the burning fiery furnace of God's wrath, which would have consumed innumerable worlds, but behold, it comes out unhurt, bright and glorious. It is then translated into the paradise of God, and placed on the eternal throne, where it shines with a beauty and splendor that would eclipse ten thousand suns. It is a precious stone, for it is the very essence of Deity; therefore it is a sure foundation, sufficient to bear the whole infinite weight of divine glory, and the salvation of the whole elect world, who, by faith, found their hopes of everlasting happiness on this sure basis; and for this purpose it was chosen and set apart by infinite wisdom, millions of ages before men or angels were brought into being. It was, indeed, set at naught by the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, and it is daily despised by formal professors and unregenerate sinners; but God has chosen it, and he has laid it in Zion, as the foundation of his declarative glory and of his people's faith and hope. And upon this precious stone all the inferior ones, that are dug out of the black quarry of nature's darkness, are laid, when they are hewed and fitly framed by the Holy Spirit. And when all God's chosen followers are brought home, the heavenly building will be completed, and the angels of heaven shall rejoice over it, saying, "*Grace, grace unto it.*"

2d. This metaphor will appear proper, when we consider that it was common for the patriarchs to put up a pillar or stone, as a lasting memorial of some extraordinary event. Hence Jacob set up a pillar at Bethel, in token of the manifestation of the divine glory, he had at that place; and Joshua set up a pillar of twelve stones at Jordan, in memory of the dividing of the waters before the ark of the covenant. So Jesus Christ is a precious stone, laid in Zion as an everlasting memorial of the love of God. He stands before the throne as an intercessor for believing sinners, presents his bleeding wounds to his Father, and declares that it is his will to have all the blessings of his purchase applied to his people. There he pleads for them continually; and when God, the Father, looks upon Jesus, he remembers his

everlasting purpose of mercy to guilty sinners. When God delivered Noah and his family from the waters of the deluge, he placed the rainbow in the clouds as a lasting memorial of his covenant, that he will no more destroy the earth by the waters of a deluge. So when he looks upon Jesus Christ, who may be styled the rainbow of the new covenant, he views him as the everlasting memorial of his sovereign, free and unmerited love to believing sinners.

3d. That Christ with propriety may be compared to a stone, will appear, when we consider that kings in former times, often engraved their laws on tables of stone, thereby intimating their durability; hence the moral law was engraven by the finger of God upon two tables of stone; and the will of God concerning lost sinners, is engraven in legible characters upon Jesus Christ, the tried stone. Here you may read the wisdom, love and mercy of Jehovah, and the purity and strictness of the divine law. On this stone you may read how mercy and truth met together, how righteousness and peace kissed each other. Here you may read the promises of God to believers, suited to every age and condition. And here you may see the way to heaven written in the red lines of Immanuel's blood.

4th. The propriety of the metaphor will further appear, when we consider that the rock which followed Israel in the wilderness, was a type of Christ, the Rock of Ages. At the command of God, Moses smote the rock, and a stream of water burst out which supplied the whole congregation, and followed them during their pilgrimage. So God, the Father, smote the Rock of Ages with the flaming sword of justice, and the streams of salvation burst forth like a mighty river. Here thirsty souls are invited to drink, and diseased souls to wash and be made whole; —here pardon, peace and eternal life flow in mighty torrents, and every man and woman is invited to drink without money and without price. This is the *“pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, which proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,”* and follows the Christian pilgrims through the journey of life, from which they often obtain a refreshing draught, and grow from strength to strength, until they arrive in heaven.

II. What is said of this stone. It is said there shall be seven eyes upon it. Here we have a definite for an indefinite number. The number seven in Scripture sometimes signifies many; thus in the Revelation it is said: *“These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God.”* By the seven spirits we are to understand the diversified operations of the Spirit of God; so the seven eyes upon one stone signify many. Divines are not agreed whether the seven eyes upon one stone are to be taken as many eyes engraven upon it, or whether the stone attracts the attention of many. We think that both opinions are correct. If

we take it in the first sense, then the metaphor points out the tender care and watchfulness of Jesus Christ over his church. He possesses the boundless wisdom of God,—and this is a necessary qualification for his office of head of the church. By his omniscience he views all things, from everlasting to everlasting. At one glance he can behold the state of every creature in the universe, and in a moment he can deliver his people from difficulties and dangers. He is compassionate; the weakest believers are as dear to him as the apple of his eye; he knows all their sorrows, and he shelters them under the wings of his love.

But if we take the metaphor in the last sense, as attracting the attention of many, then with propriety it may be said, there are many eyes upon this stone.

1st. The eye of the Eternal Father is upon it. He views it with ineffable delight, because it is the foundation upon which he has built the eternal weight of his glory, as it is manifested in the redemption of lost sinners. He sees all his perfections glorified in the obedience and death of his son. He is pleased with Jesus for his righteousness' sake; he is pleased with the whole scheme of salvation; and he is pleased with the sinner who has fled to Christ for pardon; and who builds his hope of heaven on this tried corner-stone, because this brings a full tribute of glory to all the perfections of God; therefore Jehovah can look with approbation upon the sinner who is clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

2d. The eyes of believers are upon this stone; and they view it with delight, because it is the sure foundation upon which they have built their hopes of eternal life. Their "*life is hid with Christ in God.*" He is the dearest object of their love; in him they can meet and hold sweet communion with God, the Father; and of his fulness they all receive grace for grace; in a word, they are well pleased with Christ, for he is their portion and their all.

3d. The eyes of angels are upon this stone. The union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, his incarnation, life, sufferings, death and resurrection, and his complete atonement, are the subjects of their wonder and admiration; hence, saith the apostle Peter, "*which things the angels desire to look into.*"

4th. The eyes of devils are upon this stone. Satan looks upon it with horror; for this stone fell upon him and bruised him, and will shortly destroy his kingdom and overthrow his power.

5th. The eyes of damned sinners in hell shall be upon this stone. They shall behold it with eternal shame and confusion; like Baalam, they shall see it, but not nigh; they shall look upon it

through the flames of hell; they shall see this precious corner-stone laid in Zion, bearing an infinite weight of glory, and all the saints of God, living stones, built upon this sure foundation; from the deep pit of Tophet, they shall see Jesus in heaven, seated on a throne of glory, surrounded by all the redeemed of God, shining brighter than the sun when he shineth in his strength; but they shall be forever shut out.

S E R M O N V I .

CHRIST THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF THE LIFE OF GRACE.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.—REV. xxii. 13.

THE God man Christ Jesus is all in all to every believer. What Micah absurdly said when the Danites took away his idols—“*They have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?*” may be justly said of Jesus Christ by every believer. Take away Christ from him, and you deprive him of his all; for he is the “*Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last*” of his whole salvation. View the plan of redemption, from its first origin in the eternal counsels of God, until its accomplishment in the glorification of all the ransomed Church;—examine the experience of every new-born soul, his election, justification, sanctification and complete glorification,—and Jesus Christ “*is the beginning and the end of the whole.*”

Christ, as their surety, paid the whole of their debt to the law and justice of God, and with his blood and dying groans he purchased their salvation. He is their ark of safety, where the storms of God’s wrath can never reach them. He is the rock that supports them—the fountain that cleanses them from the pollution of sin—and the food by which their new natures are fed. He is their prophet, who teaches them those lessons by which they are qualified for the enjoyment of heaven. He is their priest, who has atoned for all their sins. He is their advocate, who continually intercedes in their behalf; and he is their king, who subdues them to himself, and gives them the victory over all their enemies. “*He is made of God unto them, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*” The pardon of sin, peace with God, joy in the Holy Ghost, all the healing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and their everlasting glorification, flow to them through the red streams of the blood of

Christ. Indeed, every morsel of bread they eat, and every cup of water they drink, were purchased by the death of Christ, who is the boundless ocean from whence all their temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings flow. How precious, then, must Christ be to all true believers. Take Christ out of the Bible, and it ceases to interest them. Let Christ withdraw from their souls the light of his countenance, and they are miserable. Take Christ out of heaven, and it would be no heaven to them; for he is the "*Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*"

By the life of grace, we are to understand that principle which is implanted in the soul, in the work of regeneration, by the Holy Spirit; and those who are subjects of it are said to be "*born again,*" or to become "*a new creature.*" This principle in Scripture is often styled, "*The new nature*"—"The new man"—"*Christ in the soul.*"

This gracious principle can be implanted by nothing less than that "*almighty power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead.*"

This principle of spiritual life is like the morning light, that increases more and more until the perfect day, and the believer in whose soul it is implanted, grows from strength to strength, until "*he arrives unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*" And the Lord Jesus Christ is "*the beginning and the end,*" the author and finisher of this life of grace, because,

- I. He purchased it.
- II. He is the author of it.
- III. He is its essence.
- IV. He supports it.
- V. He finishes it.

I. He purchased it, because, by his mediation, an offended God and offending sinners may be reconciled, and sin may be pardoned consistently with the glory of the divine attributes, and the honor and dignity of the divine law. Hence he is said "*to have made peace through the blood of his cross, and to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.*" Again: "*When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son.*" By the fall of Adam, all the human race fell under the curse of the law; they became enemies to God, bond slaves to the Devil, and obnoxious to all the fiery torments of hell forever. Justice cried for their blood, and demanded a full satisfaction; and the truth of God stood engaged for the infliction of the threatened penalty. How sin could be punished, and the sinner saved, was a question which would have puzzled all the angels of heaven, and struck the universe with eternal silence. But, lo, to the wonder of all adoring worlds. Jesus steps into the sinner's place—he opens his

breast to the flaming sword of justice—and it is cooled in his heart's blood. He endures in his own person the hell of the whole elect world, and at one draught he drinks that cup of wrath which must have been their portion forever. Hence those who are saved by his blood, are styled his “*seed*,” and the “*travail of his soul*,” because his blood is the fountain from whence their eternal redemption flows. This is evident from his own words: “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*” If the Lord Jesus Christ had not died, none of the sons and daughters of Adam would have entered the kingdom of heaven. But by his dying, and lying entombed in the earth, he has produced a large increase. ONE DYING CHRIST has brought forth many millions of living Christians. His blood is the seed of the Church, which in every age of the world has generated a plentiful crop, and will continue to do so from age to age, until time shall be no more. Search after the roots of the tender plants of righteousness, and you will find them in the blood of Christ. It is this which gives being to the heavenly principle in believers' souls, and nourishes and strengthens it until, like full ears of corn, they are ripened for immortal glory.

II. He is the author of the life of grace; hence he is styled, “*The author and finisher of faith*”—“*The resurrection and the life*”—“*The way, the truth and the life*”—and “*The author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*”

It is true, that, in the economy of redemption, the application of Christ's purchase to guilty souls, is attributed to the Holy Ghost, the third person of the adorable Trinity; yet the Lord Jesus Christ may, with propriety, be termed the author and finisher of the life of grace, which will appear from these considerations.

1st. By his blood and merits he purchased all the operations of the Holy Spirit, by which believing sinners are effectually called, justified and sanctified; and since his ascension into heaven, he has sent the Holy Spirit, to apply his purchased redemption; hence he is styled, “*the Spirit of Christ*.”

2d. He is the cause of all the awakening and convicting influences of the Spirit of God, and he is the fountain to which these influences lead guilty sinners for pardon and reconciliation to God. The design of all the awakening operations of the Holy Spirit is to lead sinners to Christ.

When the Holy Spirit convinces the sinner of his guilt and misery, shows him the horrible and damnable condition he is in, and fills his mind with anguish and distress, the design is to make him feel his desperate need of Christ. When he convinces him of the dreadful wickedness of his heart, raging with the

malice of hell, and filled with pride, hypocrisy, unbelief, and atheism, it is to prepare his soul for the reception of Christ. When the poor convicted sinner is bowed down to the gates of death, made to feel the sparks of hell in his conscience, and brought to the brink of despair, it is to influence him to be willing to fly to Christ. When he is relieved from all the horrors of an unconverted state, Christ is the author and efficient cause of his deliverance; he is the lovely object that delights his heart, the source of all his joy, and the subject-matter of all his songs of praise.

The same almighty voice which called worlds and systems of worlds into being, and called dead Lazarus from his grave, also calls the condemned and despairing sinner from death unto life. Christ is the almighty Saviour, who snatches the sinner as a brand from the burning. He is the almighty Conqueror, who breaks the bonds of death, and rescues the captive soul from the jaws of the roaring lion of hell.

He who said, "*Let there be light, and there was light,*" speaks peace to the troubled conscience, removes the horrible cloud of midnight darkness from the mind, and fills the soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory. He, who, in the days of his flesh, cast out devils, opened the eyes of the blind, and raised the dead now cures all the murdering diseases of the soul; he binds up the broken heart, and effectually removes the deadly poison infused into the heart of man by that old serpent the Devil. And he is the author of all those precious graces implanted in the believer by the Holy Spirit.

A view of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, begets the new nature, forms the image of Christ in the soul, and impresses all the moral attributes of God upon the heart. "*But we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*"

A spiritual and experimental knowledge of the personal glory, suitableness, and boundless sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his divine and human natures, his offices and endearing characters and relations, is the cause of a saving, justifying faith; hence it is said: "*By his knowledge, shall my righteous servant justify many.*" To the believer he appears in all the amiable excellencies that the divine and human natures possess.—The first faith's view of his lovely face, wins all the affections of the heart; he appears to the believing sinner exactly suited to his wretched and helpless condition, and able to save to the very uttermost degree of guilt and misery; therefore the language of his heart is, He is such a Saviour as I need. None but Christ. Had I ten thousand souls, he should have them all.

A view of Christ effectually humbles the soul, lays it in the dust, and fills it with shame and self-loathing. "*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*" Again saith the prophet Isaiah: "*I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims. Each one had six wings. With twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly; and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts! The whole earth is full of his glory!—And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then I said, Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.*" Give the soul one view of the glory of the divine attributes, as they shine in the face of Jesus Christ, and that moment it sinks into nothing before the Eternal All; for it is so surrounded with the transcendant brightness of the divine glory, that it feels lost in the shoreless and fathomless ocean.

A view of the love of God manifested in Christ, gives the believing sinner a most affecting sense of the evil of sin, and melts his heart into floods of penitential sorrow. "*They shall smite upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.*" When the penitent sinner has a faith's view of that Jesus, whom he has so often pierced and trampled under foot, then his heart is wrung with anguish, and he cries out with penitent Ephraim: "*What have I to do any more with idols!*" Now, the thought of ever committing another sin, is worse than death itself.

A view of the infinite perfections of God, manifested in Christ, is the cause of all true love to God. The reason why sinners, in an unconverted state, do not love God, is, because they are blind; for Satan, who is "*the God of this world, has blinded their minds, lest the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*" But no sooner does the "*light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus,*" shine into their souls, than they are enraptured with his excellency, and their hearts are filled with his love. Now the greatest earthly splendors, jewels, crowns, thrones and sceptres, appear mean and contemptible as they toys of children, when compared with the resplendent glories of Immanuel. Let the most malignant infidel, or the most profane sinner on the earth, have but one faith's view of the lovely face of Jesus,—that moment his heart is captivated, and all the devils in hell can not keep him from Christ. He is the "*Alpha and Omega, the*

beginning and the end, the first and the last" of the whole life of grace; for,

III. He is the essence of it. In many passages of scripture he is denominated "*Life*," or "*The Life*." These expressions refer to both the life of grace, and to the life of glory, which he communicates to the souls of his people; hence he says: "*I am the way and the truth and the life*. *No man cometh unto the Father but by me*." Again it is said: "*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory*;" and "*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*."

That Christ is the very essence of that principle of spiritual life, which is implanted in the souls of all true believers, is evident from the consideration that their whole salvation is derived from him, as their mediator, surety and covenant head: for,

THE DEATH OF CHRIST is the foundation of their reconciliation to God. "*For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life*."

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST is the foundation of their justification before God. "*Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;—to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*."

THE MERITS OF CHRIST constitute the foundation of their peace with God. "*Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*."

CHRIST FORMED IN THEM, is the foundation of their hope of heaven. "*Christ in you the hope of glory*."

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST procures their sanctification. "*In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness*." "*These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb*."

THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST is the foundation of their communion with God. "*Jesus said, If any man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*."

THEIR RELATION TO CHRIST is the foundation of their title to the heavenly inheritance. "*The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified to*

gether." Christ is the Boaz or blood relation, who redeemed their inheritance for them, and bought it with his own blood.

THE WORTHINESS OF CHRIST is the foundation of their acceptance with God. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests."

CHRIST'S UNCHANGABLE LOVE is the ground of their final perseverance and eternal glorification. In a word, he is *all in all* to his heaven-born children. He "is made unto them wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." He is their wisdom. He is styled "the essential wisdom of God," and it is said that "in him dwell all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" and that "he is the wisdom of God and the power of God to them that believe." He is their righteousness; for "he is made of God unto them righteousness." He is styled "the Lord their righteousness," and "The end of the law for righteousness." He is their sanctification; for he is made unto them "redemption." He is their life, their strength and their all; for,

IV. He supports the life of grace, and upholds it until it arrives at full perfection in glory. Hence he says: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."—The question may be asked, How is the life of grace supported in the believing soul? I answer, By that union which subsists between Christ and all his spiritual children, whereby they are said to be in Christ, and he in them. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."—Again, "I am the vine; ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." And we are told that there is "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." But it may be asked, In what respects are they in Christ Jesus?

1. They are in him as their COVENANT HEAD, as is obvious from the tenor of the fifth chapter of Romans, in which the Apostle runs the parallel between the imputation of Adam's sin to his natural seed, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to his spiritual seed. As believers are in Christ as their covenant head, they are inseparably united to the infinite fountain of life; for it has pleased the Father, that as head of the church, "in him should all fulness dwell." Hence the life of the believer is safely hid with Christ in God, for he is the life of God, and because he lives, his people must live also.

2. They are in him as the LORD THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS, for they are clothed with the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ,

which is large and as wide as the law of God, and which has received the full approbation of heaven. Therefore, they are one with Christ, in view of the law and justice of God.

As the bride, by virtue of her marriage covenant, becomes legally one with the bridegroom, and stands legally entitled, in a joint right, to all the riches he possesses;—so, believing sinners, by virtue of their marriage union with Christ as the Lord their righteousness, stand legally entitled, in the view of the law of God, in a joint right, to all the boundless riches of Christ. His person, mediation, merits, and purchase, are theirs; in a word, “all things are theirs, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come; all are theirs, and, therefore, their is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”

3. They are in Christ as the fountain of all divine influences. In this respect, they are mystically one with him: they are united to him as the members to the head, or as the branches to the vine; therefore the life of grace is supported and strengthened by constant supplies, communicated from the boundless sufficiency of Christ; and these supplies will be continued until they are ripened for, and arrived at, the heavenly state, as is evident from the words of the Apostle: “And he gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Divine influences are communicated to their souls by the Holy Spirit. “When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he shall guide you into all truth.”—And the means by which they are communicated, are the reading and preaching of the word of God, meditation, prayer, self-examination, &c.; all these are so many channels by which light, life and strength are conveyed to the people of God.—Through the word and ordinances, Christ and his people meet and hold communion, and thus his children are strengthened in the inner man, and thereby grow in grace and the knowledge of the truth. Sometimes he opens their understanding (as in the case of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus), and shows them the spiritual meaning of his word, which is concealed from the carnal world. Sometimes his promises are sweeter than honey and the honey-comb, and on such occasions he often shows them their title to heaven, written in the red lines of Immanuel’s blood. Sometimes, when they are ready to sink under gloomy doubts and dismal fears, to question the reality of their coversion to God, and are about to raze the foundation of their hopes—to their sweet surprise, he

unveils to them his lovely face, speaks peace to their souls, appears in the galleries of his grace, gives them sweet views of his glory, and blesses them with clear evidences of their interest in all the privileges of the sons of God.

With the dyed garments of salvation, he sometimes meets his people at his holy table. There he shows them his vesture dipped in blood; he describes the thorns he wore, and tells o'er his bloody passion, he shows them his pierced hands and feet, the wide wound of the spear in his side, and all the scarlet streams of his shed blood. These views fill their hearts with deep repentance, and godly sorrow for sin, and excite in them a holy resentment against it. He often meets them in secret, and when no human eye beholds them. He listens to their complaints, and suffers them to lay before him all their trials and sorrows. Often when they are reflecting upon him, he breaks into their souls, and gives them a taste of heaven, or a faith's view of their everlasting home. By afflictive despesations he qualifies them for heaven. These have an excellent tendency to strengthen the life of grace; hence it is very common for the children of God to be exercised with them. Says Christ: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." And their design is to wean the child of God from this world, to discover to him the bitterness of sin, and qualify him for the enjoyment of his everlasting rest. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory." Christ often permits the Devil and ungodly men to persecute and afflict his children, and thus he uses them to brighten the vessels of mercy for the kingdom of heaven, when they will shine brighter than the sun in his strength.

V. He finishes the life of grace; for he completes the work of sanctification, and thus the life of grace ripens into the life of glory. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified;" hence he is styled the "Author and finisher of faith." Whenever the work of sanctification is completed, the believer is ripe for heaven; and then he encounters this last and most painful conflict, at the close of which his warfare is ended, and his weary soul brought to rest forever in the bosom of Jesus. But in this trying hour, the Lord Jesus Christ attends the child of God, and affords him every necessary support. Now he gives him such clear views of his power, and the efficacy of his blood and merits, that he can look death in the face with confidence; without fear he can reflect on the stern and inflexible justice of God, and welcome the day of his complete redemption. Jesus, dying, conquered the monster, deprived him of his sting, and converted him from the king of terrors to a kind friend, commissioned to call the

humble believer to his Father's house. And as he passes through the dark valley, he raises his Ebenezer, saying; "O death, where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory!—Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now his body falls into the dust, and there it rests in union with Christ until the morning of the resurrection. But his soul, escorted by angels, mounts to heaven, where grace is ripened into glory, faith into vision, and hope into eternal fruition.

S E R M O N V I I .

THE EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST AS DISPLAYED IN THE PLAN OF SALVATION.

Come and see.—JOHN i. 46.

IN this chapter, we have an account of the first dawn of the gospel day, when Christ, the glorious sun of righteousness, made his first appearance on the confines of our lost and ruined world. The important period had now arrived when the sceptre had departed from Judah—when all the Old Testament prophesies respecting the incarnation of the Son of God were to be accomplished—and when all the types and bloody sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation were to receive their complete fulfillment in Jesus Christ, their glorious antitype.

In the beginning of this chapter, the evangelist informs us, that the Eternal Word, who was in the beginning with God and **was** God, and by whom the heavens and the earth were created, **was** made flesh and dwelt with us; that he came unto his own, but his own received him not. After asserting the great fundamental doctrines of the Godhead, and incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, he gives us some information of him in his public character, and the commencement of his mediatorial work; he tells us that the Eternal Father gave a plain and visible demonstration of the divinity of his person, and of the truth and authority of his mission, by the Holy Ghost descending upon him in a bodily shape, and by an audible voice from heaven proclaiming him to be his beloved son, in whom he is well pleased, as the other evangelists testify.

In consequence of this, his forerunner, John, openly proclaimed him to the world as the great propitiatory sacrifice to the law and justice of God; “Behold the **Lamb** of God that taketh away the sin of the world.”

The epithet Lamb represents, first, the spotless innocence and purity of his soul and body, by which, as the Apostle ex-

presses it, he was "*holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.*" Again, it represents him as the all-sufficient efficacious, atoning sacrifice, to the justice of God for sin. In this view, he is termed in Scripture, "*The lamb that was slain,*" and "*The lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world;*" and he was typified under the Mosaic dispensation by the paschal lamb, and by the other bloody sacrifices. He is also called the Lamb of God, because he was chosen and ordained of God, in the councils of eternity, as the great sacrifice for sin; and who should take away all sin. He is called "*The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,*" because his mediation and atonement are complete, almighty and all-sufficient to remove the guilt, power and pollution of sin wherever it is applied.

The next important circumstance mentioned by the Evangelist is, the Godlike power and energy that attended the ministry of our divine Lord. Thus, for instance, as he goes into Galilee, he meets Philip—like a God he speaks to his heart with converting light and power. He just says, Follow me, and the consequence is, that he is a willing subject of king Jesus in the day of his power—his heart opens like the heart of Lydia and receives Christ; he forsakes all and follows him.

The soul that meets with Christ, sees his glory by the eye of faith, and feels his love shed abroad in his heart—possesses a blessed secret he cannot keep—he sees much beauty, glory, and precious sweetness in Christ—he sees him fairer than the sons of men, the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. In a word, he sees him to be such a willing and all-sufficient Saviour, that he must tell the blessed news—he must tell what a precious Christ and sweet salvation he has found. This we find was the case with Philip, when he meets with Jesus, sees his glory and tastes his love—he runs to Nathaniel with the blessed tidings, saying, "*I have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*" Nathaniel, though a good man, seems to answer like the sinner, "*Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*" Philip replies in the words of our text, "*Come and see.*"

When a poor lost sinner meets with Jesus Christ, and feels the sweetness of his pardoning love, tells the unconverted what a pardoning Christ, and what a sweet salvation he has found—when in the very bowels of Jesus he entreats them to flee the wrath to come, his language appears dark and strange, they reply as Nathaniel did, can there be any good thing in religion?—Says the sinner, this is a dark mystery to me; it looks like foolishness, can there be any reality in it? But the heaven-born soul always replies in the language of Philip, "*Come and see.*" Once I was blind and dead; then the things of God and

the blessed realities of religion appeared as foolish to me as they now do to you; but were the Lord to open your eyes;— did you know what is to be felt and known of Christ and religion, you would part with all things for this pearl of great price. But “*come and see,*” taste, feel and know for yourself.

In the prosecution of this subject, I shall observe the following method:

I. Point out some precious things that the believer sees in Christ;

II. Show what it is, to come and see;

III. Answer some of the sinner's objections against trying to come and see.

I. Point out some things that the believer sees in Christ.— And 1st. You are called to come and see the infinite and indescribable glories of his person, as Immanuel, God with us, or God in our nature. Saith Isaiah, “*To us a child is born; to us a son is given; his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*” Saith Zachariah, “*Awake, O sword, against the shepherd, and smite the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts.*” Saith John, “*In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.*” All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. Again he saith, “*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” The Apostle tells us, “*That he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God—yet he made himself of no reputation, but took upon himself the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the death of the cross.*” All the infinite glories, perfections and excellencies of the Godhead are essentially in him; all the graces of the Divine Spirit are in him in the highest possible degree; every beauty, amiable excellence, and comely proportion, that the infinite wisdom of God could devise, are in him.

In the Songs of Solomon, the daughters of Jerusalem, who represent the unconverted world, or formal professors, ask the spouse or true believer, “*What is thy beloved, more than another beloved?*” The spouse, or living Christian, replies to this question, “*My beloved is white and ruddy, the chieftest among ten thousand; his head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven; his eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set; his cheeks are as a bed of spices, like sweet flowers; his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh; his hands are as gold rings set with the beryl; his belly is as bright ivory, overlaid with sapphires; his legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold; his countenance is as*

Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; his mouth is most sweet." Thus she describes her beloved till created language fails to express her ideas, and at last, she sums up the whole: "Yea, he is altogether lovely." Says John, "*I saw in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, one like unto the son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*" But why do we dwell upon particulars, when angels and arch-angels, seraphim and cherubim, with all the ransomed millions round the throne, will have spent ten thousand times ten thousand ages, dwelling upon the glories and beauties of Jesus, they must acknowledge with the queen of Sheba, that the half, yea, that the ten thousandth part can never be told, for he is the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley. He is the Almighty Jehovah, the Everlasting God, the Eternal Uncreated I AM. Infinity, eternity, incomprehensibility, self-existence, and immutability, are the essential properties of his nature. He is the Creator of all worlds. By one word of his almighty power, suns, moons, stars, worlds and systems of worlds, came rolling out of non-existence into being. By his boundless unerring wisdom and almighty power, the mysterious wheels of his adorable providence are rolled on from age to age, and all the affairs of the natural and moral world moved along in the most exact order and harmony, so as to terminate in the great purposes of his glory. He is almighty in power—he performs his whole will, and pleasure in the armies of heaven above, and among the inhabitants of the earth beneath. He comprehends the ocean in the hollow of his hand: he weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance, and takes up the isles as a very little thing. He is the essential wisdom of God: he planned the universe—he formed the established laws of nature, by which the order and harmony of all worlds and systems of worlds are supported. He is the author and finisher of the heaven astonishing scheme of redemption, that strikes all the adoring worlds with wonder, that the astonished angels with praise and adoration desire to look into. He beholds all things from everlasting to everlasting: he looks from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell, at one immediate view; yea, what is infinitely more, with one view he sees, knows and comprehends all the shoreless, fathomless glories of the Godhead. He is infinite and immaculately holy—he is infinite amiable excellence itself, the perfect beauty of every perfection. In a word, he is the "*Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty,*" who humbles himself to behold the things that are done in heaven—

before whom bright shining seraphims veil their faces and the purest ranks of glorified spirits are justly chargeable with comparative folly.

Justice and judgment are the habitations of his throne. To maintain the glory of his law, the honorand dignity of his government, and to manifest his infinite abhorrence and displeasure against sin, a bottomless hell was kindled, and its tremendous blaze perpetually kept up: his breath, like a stream of brimstone, blows the flames of Tophet, and displays the power of his just vengeance in the punishment of finally impenitent sinners. He is love itself—his very essence is love.—His love passeth all created understanding: it is an infinite ocean without shore or bottom; it is everlasting, unsolicited love, sovereign, free and unmerited love. It is almighty, all-powerful, all-conquering love: in a word, his love, mercy and goodness and grace, stoop from the heaven of heavens to the very suburbs of hell, and raises crawling worms—rebels that deserve the lowest hell, from the deep and miry clay, from all the dreadful horrors of an unconverted state, to the very summit of glory, and to the perfection of blessedness.

2. You are called to come and see what a precious, suitable Saviour Jesus is, when viewed in his person, and in his two natures and three offices, as Prophet, Priest and King. He is man in our nature, our friend, our kinsman and elder brother. He is flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, as he possessed a true body, and a reasonable soul, he was capacitated to yield a perfect sinless obedience to the precepts of the divine law, in the room and place of all his ransomed blood-bought millions.—He was thereby qualified to endure the curse—to suffer and die, the just for the unjust—to pay down the infinite price of his people's ransom to the justice of God in divine blood, till justice could demand no more, till he could say to the whole work of their salvation and redemption, **IT IS FINISHED!** In our nature he has wrought out a complete law, fulfilling righteousness—a righteousness commensurate to the highest claims of the law and justice of God; a righteousness so pure, excellent and glorious, that the all-seeing eye of the stern, inflexible justice of God, can find neither flaw nor blemish in it. In this righteousness, a God of consummate holiness and purity, he can be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly sinner, that believeth in Jesus.

But as he is man in our nature, so he is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, possessed of all the infinite glories, perfections and excellencies of the Godhead. His divine and human natures are so wonderfully and mysteriously united, as to constitute but one individual personage; hence, the Apostle terms his blood that was shed for the remission of sins, "*the blood of God*," as it was the blood of Him who was truly and essentially

God, as well as man. Now say, is he not the most suitable Saviour, just such a one as such poor lost sinners as we, need? He is exactly qualified to be a mediator between God and man; for he possesses the nature of both the offended and the offending parties; therefore, he is a most suitable day's man to lay his hands upon both of their heads.

Therefore, come and see what a suitable Saviour Jesus is, when viewed in his prophetical office. The Evangelist John, tells us "*that he was the only begotten son, that he was in the bosom of the Father.*" The child that lies in the Father's bosom, knows the Father's heart; he can form the most correct idea of his mind and intentions: so Christ, the friend of sinners, from eternity, lay in his Father's bosom. He knows his mind and intentions; he knows all the gracious designs of his infinitely compassionate heart. Therefore, with propriety he may be termed the eternal Word, that reveals the mind of God to a lost world, that brings all the gracious designs of his love and mercy to the view of poor sinners: hence, he is termed "*the true light*,"—"the great light that sprang up in the dark region and shadow of death"—"*the day star*"—"*the morning star*"—"*the sun of righteousness*" that dispels the darkness of the moral world.

As prophet, he reveals the living way, in which God is reconcileable—sin pardonable—and heaven attainable. By his word and spirit he speaks to the hearts of spiritually dead sinners, and shows them the extent, purity and spirituality of God's law; he discovers to them the God provoking and soul damning nature of sin, and the baseness, filthiness and utter insufficiency of their own righteousness. He speaks peace to the troubled conscience, binds up the broken heart, and unveils the glory, fulness and suitableness, of that great salvation he has wrought out by his active and passive obedience. As a prophet, like a shepherd, he leads his flock into the green pastures of the Gospel; he leads them from strength to strength, along the narrow way of holiness, self-denial and communion with God; he leads them in his own footsteps, and often in a way that they know not, as he directs all things by the mysterious movements of his Providence, to fit and prepare them as vessels of mercy, for the reception of an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory.

Again you are called to come and see what a precious, suitable Saviour Jesus is, when viewed in his priestly office. The Divine Spirit tells us that "*he is a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek*;" "*that he is a merciful and faithful high priest*;" a "*high priest that can be touched with a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, as in all points he was tempted, as we are, yet without sin*;" "*that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession*." View him in his priestly office, and by faith you may see that glorious,

precious, sweet smelling sacrifice, which was the antitype of all the bloody sacrifices for thousands of years. The sacrifice that made a competent atonement to the law and justice of God for all the sins of many millions of lost sinners; for the sins of that exceeding great multitude which no man can number, out of all nations, kindreds, tongues and people upon the earth, that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Do you ask what was this sacrifice? I answer, it was the immaculate human nature of the Son of God—his spotless, holy soul and body—which was so intimately united to the second person of the ever blessed Trinity, as to constitute but one identical person. The altar upon which this was offered, (and which sanctified the gift and gave an infinite dignity and value to the sacrifice,) was the divine nature, and the priest that offered it up was Immanuel, God in human flesh. Here faith may come and see the Lamb of God, slain by the sword of divine justice, hanging upon the accursed tree, and suffering from four bleeding wounds! A God of holy and inflexible justice laying upon him the iniquities of us all, taking a holy, Godlike pleasure in bruising and putting him to grief, while mercy, pardon, salvation and eternal life, flow in scarlet streams from his bleeding veins and breaking heart, like an infinite ocean without shore or bottom! Here you may come and see the immeasurable ocean of the love of God, that moved from all eternity in the infinitely gracious and compassionate heart of Jehovah, to lost sinners of Adam's race, finding vent through the bleeding veins of the Son of God! Yea, faith may come and see the bloody sufferings, the dying agonies and the expiring groans of the incarnate God, giving life, eternal life, to innumerable millions—to an exceeding great number, like sand by the sea shore!

Again you are called, to come and see what a suitable Saviour Jesus is, when viewed in his kingly office. The Father declares, that "*he is the King, that he has set upon his holy hill of Zion;*" and in Matthew, he himself tells us, "*that all power in heaven and in earth is committed to him.*" As a king, like an Almighty conqueror, he has demolished the strong holds of the Devil; he has overturned the dark empire of hell; he has rescued millions of lost sinners from the devouring lion of the infernal pit; and he has led the monster, Death, in chains! In the day of his power, he subdues the hearts and wills of the most stubborn, hell-hardened rebels; he lays them like humble penitents in the dust, and makes them the obedient and willing subjects of his cross: he bruises the Old Serpent under their feet, and makes them conquerors and more than conquerors at last, over sin, Satan, death and hell!

3. You are called to come and see Mercy and Truth meeting together, and righteousness and peace kissing each other in

the person of Christ; and the attributes of the Godhead meeting, uniting and harmonizing in that great salvation which Christ has wrought out for poor lost sinners by his obedience and sufferings.

Here you may see everlasting love exhausting the very funds of heaven,—laying out the boundless riches of the Godhead, and presenting to perishing sinners the richest, the greatest, and the most precious gift that God could bestow: *“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* Here you may see the holy, strict and inflexible justice of God, receiving the most complete and ample satisfaction in the streaming blood and dying agonies of the incarnate God; a satisfaction commensurate to its highest demands—infinitely more glorious than it could have received in the damnation of the whole human race. Here you may see rich redeeming mercy, flowing in scarlet streams from the bleeding heart of a dying Jesus: Here you may see the burning throne of justice sprinkled, and the flaming sword of divine wrath cooled in the blood of the incarnate God, and the living way laid open by which God can be just and the justifier of the worst of sinners.

4. You are called to come and see the rich provision of the everlasting covenant of peace, treasured up in Christ. Here you may see the hiding place from the storms of God's wrath, in which the most polluted sinners may rest in complete and eternal safety: Here you may see the strong hold opened for the reception of guilty law-condemned sinners: Here you may see *“the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness,”* flowing from the wounds made by the thorns, nails and spear: Here you may see blood-bought pardons freely offered to the chief of sinners: Here you may see the white robe of a perfect law fulfilling righteousness, that covers millions of naked souls, and delivers them from the curse and condemning sentence of God's holy law. In a word, you may come and see pardon for the guilty, strength for the weak, eyes for the blind, feet for the lame, food for the hungry, and all things necessary for sanctification and complete eternal glorification.

5. You are called to come and see the gracious willingness of Jesus to receive the chief and worst of sinners. Who can doubt the veracity of Christ, the Amen, the faithful and true witness? The calls, offers and invitations, that every where abound in the Bible, speak the very language of his heart—*“Ho! every one that thirsteth, come to the waters!”* *“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*

But if the word, promise, and oath of God, will not convince you of Christ's willingness to save, you are called to come and see plain matters of fact that silence every objection. View

his incarnation, humiliation, bitter sufferings and dying agonies. All these proclaim his gracious willingness to save the chief of sinners. See him leaving his eternal throne of glory, veiling his Godhead in clay, born in a stable, and laid in a manger; and what is the cause of this amazing abasement and humiliation? Why, to save poor lost sinners! View Gethsemane's groans and bloody sweat! see him buffeted, spit upon, and scourged, till one might tell all his bones. See him crowned with thorns, carrying the cross on his bleeding, mangled shoulders, through the streets of Jerusalem, and up Mount Calvary to the place of execution! See him there hanging on the cursed tree, suspended by four bleeding wounds. Hear him crying, in the most extreme anguish, "*My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me!*" See him sinking in the agonies of death, and falling a pale, lifeless and ghastly corpse!

Now, sinner, had Christ been unwilling to save you, would he have endured all this to prevent you from sinking into hell?—When he died, justice cried, I am satisfied! and the language of every drop of blood which flowed from his veins, is, "*Come and see!*"

Again, consider the tears he shed over obstinate sinners, in the days of his flesh; his melting and moving lamentations over the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the very persons he knew in a few days would imbrue their hands in his blood—and none can doubt his willingness to save the chief of sinners. When he beheld Jerusalem, he wept over it, saying, "*If thou hadst known at least, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace;*" and after his resurrection, he commanded his apostles to make the first offers of mercy to the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the very persons who had imbrued their hands in his blood. His command was, "*Go preach my gospel to every creature, beginning at Jerusalem.*" A certain author paraphrasing on this passage, expresses it thus—"Go to that bloody city; as they are the chief of sinners, so their case is the most desperate—give them the first offers of mercy—though they have blasphemed my divinity, and cruelly imbrued their hands in my blood—though they have despised the tears that I have shed over them, and imprecated my blood to be upon them—tell them it was for them I shed both,—my tears, to soften their hearts towards God, and my blood, that I might reconcile God to them. Tell them that you have seen the print of the nails in my hands and feet, and the print of the spear in my side, and all the marks of their murdering cruelty; tell them that all these, so far from giving me vindictive thoughts concerning them, that every wound and every scar pleads in their behalf, and cries for their pardon and redemption before God—and enables me to bestow it; yea, if you see that poor unhappy wretch who ran the spear into my side, tell him there is a nearer

and better way to come to my heart—even to my heart's love! If he will look upon me, whom he has pierced, and mourn, I will cherish him in the same bosom he has wounded; and he shall find the blood he has shed, a sufficient remedy against the sin of shedding it. Tell him he will put me to more pain in rejecting this offer of my blood, than he did when he drew it forth!"

6. Come and see the wonders that the redeeming blood and all-conquering love of Jesus has performed in every age of the world. Here you see spiritually dead souls awakened, converted and raised up to newness of life; hearts of stone harder than the adamant, broken and melted into floods of penitential sorrow; eyes that were blinded by the God of this world, opened and enlightened to behold the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus—to behold the ravishing beauty of Immanuel—to see the height, depth, length and breadth of the unmeasurable ocean of the love of God in Christ Jesus—which passes all created understanding. Here you may see the enemies of God, the veterans of the camp of hell, ministers of wickedness, lying at the feet of Jesus, weeping, pardoned penitents! In a word, you may come and see debauchees, thieves, murderers and hell-hardened deists, transformed from glory to glory in the image of Christ—an exceeding great multitude, which no man can number, redeemed out of all nations, and kindred, and tongues, and people, who were once dead in sin, and children of wrath even as others, but their robes have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

7. Come and see how sweet the love of Jesus is, and how ravishing the glories and beauties of his face appear to the pardoned believer in his sweet seasons of communion with God. We are creatures who are naturally curious; we are solicitous to know secrets and find out mysteries. Well, here is the secret of the Lord, that is, with them that fear him; here are the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which none know but the heaven born soul; here is the hidden manna, the white stone, and the new name, that no man knows but him that receives it; here is Christ's banqueting house—heaven upon earth—the apples of Paradise—the grapes of Eschol—the wine, milk and honey of Canaan: Here is the peace of God that passeth all understanding—the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. Here the pardoned believer sits down under the shadow of Christ with great delight, and finds his fruit pleasant to the taste. Like Moses from the top of Pisgah, he views the land of promise; by faith he views his everlasting inheritance, and reads his title to that inheritance, in the red lines of the blood of Christ. These views fill the soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Now the believer sinks into the dust before God, and cries with Job,

“Before I heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

8. You are called to come and see how soul refreshing the smiles of Jesus are to the dying believer, when he is parting with time, when he is about to take a long farewell of all earthly things, when the light of glory begins to dawn, and the angelic guards begin to appear. See the believer in the last agonies of death, leaning his fainting head on the living bosom of Jesus—heaven dawning—the sun of righteousness shining into his departing soul—with what joy can he then take a last adieu of this wretched and ensnaring world and wing his flight to climes of glory!

II. Show what it is to “*Come and see.*” The meaning of the expression is, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus in Isaiah, “*Look unto me and be ye saved;*” that is, believe in me. To come and see, signifies that we part with the love and practice of every sin, and accept of salvation on God’s terms.—Christ is offered in the gospel to guilty sinners as God’s unspeakable gift; therefore, to come and see, is to accept of Christ in all his offices as a free gift.

Would you come and see the suitableness, fulness and all-sufficiency of Christ, then like blind Bartimeus, you must lie by the way-side; when Jesus of Nazareth passeth by, you must cry for mercy as the condemned criminal cries for a pardon, and take no denial, till the almighty voice of the Son of God speak peace and pardon to your soul.

But to be more particular, would you attempt to come and see: You must attend to the business of your salvation, as a work of the last importance, and which must be done. You must listen to carnal excuses no longer; you must now begin that important work—put it off no longer—for the present is God’s time. Therefore, like Lot, “*arise, flee for your life—look not behind you—tarry not in all the plain;*” for eternal life is to be forever lost or won.

2. You must forsake your vain companions, vain conversation, and every known sin; you must diligently attend to the performance of every known duty, and seek the Lord in all the means of his appointment. Thus you must pray in your family and in secret; you must frequently reflect on your dreadful condition while destitute of an interest in Christ, for you are now in the plains of Sodom under the curse of God; therefore reflect on the danger of turning back, and take care that you do not sit down on a false, delusive hope.

3. Attend to the voice of conscience, cherish every motion of the Holy Spirit, and, like the importunate widow, give the Lord no rest until he speak peace and pardon to your soul.

4. Resolve in the strength of God never to rest in your re-formations, duties, prayers, tears or melting frames, till the Lord himself speak peace to your heart.

5. Lie at the feet of Jesus, and, like an humble penitent, plead his gracious offers of mercy to the chief of sinners; plead the infinite, all-sufficiency of that atoning blood which has washed away the guilt of millions. Meditate on the fulness and freeness of the great salvation which is provided for miserable, lost, perishing sinners of every description. Attempt to stretch forth the withered hand, and to throw your helpless, perishing, dying soul into the outstretched arms of sovereign mercy—crying, Lord give me faith! help me to believe! Lord open my understanding! let the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shine into my benighted soul!

III. Answer some objections, and—

1. Says some poor Christless sinner, I am called to come and see the beauties and glories of Jesus; but this is a dark mystery—Jesus is an unknown Christ to me.

Answer—Go to Jesus with your complaint—tell him you are blind and cannot see. He came into our world on the kind, gracious errand, to seek and save the lost—to seek and save just such as you. He came “*to open the eyes of the blind—to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound.*”

2. Do you know and feel that you are blind; the Spirit of God taught you this truth. While you are out of Christ your case is so dreadful that no language can describe it; but dreadful as it is, while the Spirit of God strives with you there is hope; therefore plead with vehemence—you have the word and promise of God, that “*him that cometh to Jesus, he will in no wise cast out.*” But do you say, I am not only blind, but dead; dead in trespasses and sins; I do not sensibly feel my case; my heart is as hard as a rock; I have no disposition to come to Christ; why then should I attempt to come till God gives me the disposition?

Answer—Wretched sinner, you are the very person above all others who should be storming heaven with your cries, for there is no case on this side of hell more desperate, with this exception, that we hope your day of grace is not eternally past, but that the Spirit is still striving with you. A want of heart, will, and disposition to fly to Christ is a death spot, a hell spot—not only a symptom of spiritual death, but a woeful token that the second death is taking hold of you. It is a proof of the most daring enmity and rebellion against God. Your great excuse is, that you are in such a dead sleep, that you cannot see nor feel your danger. This excuse is your crime. Spiritual blindness and hardness of heart are soul damning sins. As well

might the robber plead his insatiable covetousness, as an excuse for his crime, or the murderer plead his unconquerable malice. Are you blind to your danger:—And what says the word of God to your case?—“*This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.*” Is your heart hard and unfeeling:—What does Jehovah himself say of this excuse? “*Thy hard and impenitent heart treasures up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*” Poor, spiritually dead soul, stop—suspend the laughter of fools for a moment, while I deliver to you the sweetest news that ever reached the ears of sinners out of hell. “*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came to save sinners*”—sinners of the worst kind—sinners even of your character and description. “*He is the resurrection and the life;*” and if you believe on him, though you were dead, yet you shall live: he has an almighty voice that can raise the dead from their graves at his command. Lazarus, though four days dead and in a state of putrefaction, sprung into life, when he said, Lazarus come forth. And would you but come and see, had you but one faith’s view of his lovely face, this would subdue your heart, conquer your will, and make you willing to part with all things for this pearl of great price.

3. But, says some Christless soul, I have had many calls by the Word and Spirit of God—I have often resolved that I would try to come and see, but owing to the cares of the world, and snares of the wicked, I have quenched my convictions and again turned back to sin; and although I wish to come to Christ, before I die, yet this is not a convenient time. I pray you have me excused until I become satisfied with the pleasures of this world, or until I am in such circumstances that I can obtain religion without being exposed to reproach. Is this your character, your case is desperate—your day of grace is drawing near the eleventh hour—the Judge of quick and dead, who carries the keys of hell and death, who shuts and no man opens, has declared his Spirit shall not always strive with you; and that “*he that is often reproved and stiffeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*” Then let every conviction-stifler here be persuaded to come to Jesus, and thereby take shelter in the strong hold appointed for the prisoners of hope before it is eternally too late.

4. But, says some heavy laden sinner, I have been long trying to come and see. Were I in possession of ten thousand worlds, and could Christ be bought, I would freely give them all for an interest in him; but the more I try to come and see, the more clearly do I discover my own misery, and the more darkly does the plan of salvation appear. Alas! what shall I do?

The vengeance of God pursues you—the flaming sword of divine justice is unsheathed. There is no hope, help nor safety for you but in Christ; therefore, escape for your life, storm the heavens with your cries. Jesus stands with open arms ready to receive you—his bleeding wounds and dying groans invite you—all that he did for your salvation bids you welcome; therefore venture upon him and you shall see the glory of God.

S E R M O N V I I I .

THE BELIEVER EMBRACING CHRIST.

Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God.—LUKE ii. 28.

THIS is a pleasing truth, “*Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious.*” No sooner does a sinner obtain a faith’s view of Jesus Christ, than his heart is filled with “*joy unspeakable and full of glory.*” The Psalmist, speaking of Christ, says, that “*he is fairer than the sons of men, and his loving kindness is better than life.*” What comfort and holy joy must good old Simeon have felt, when he held the lovely Jesus in his arms! As Dr. Watts beautifully expresses it:

“With what divine and vast delight
The good old man was fill’d,
When fondly in his withered arms
He clasped the Holy Child.”

In the context it is said, that “*Simeon was just and devout;*” that is, he lived in the love and practice of all the duties of the first and second table of the law of God; and all true believers are careful to maintain good works. Simeon “*was waiting for the consolation of Israel;*” that is, he anxiously looked, and fervently prayed, for the coming of the promised Messiah, who is “*the consolation of Israel.*” “*It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ;*” therefore he saw him by the eye of faith before he beheld him with his bodily eye; so faith in the promises always precedes and prepares the soul for the sensible enjoyment of Christ in time, and for immediate enjoyment of him in the heavenly state. The Evangelist proceeds: “*And he came by the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms and blessed God.*” From these words we may observe,

1st. As aged Simeon took the blessed Jesus in his arms, so it is the privilege of every true Christian to embrace Christ in the arms of faith.

2d. Simeon met with the infant Saviour in the temple; so the followers of Jesus often meet with, and by faith embrace Christ in the house of God. There are the chambers of his love, where they are permitted to see his glory, and sit under his shadow with great delight; for this privilege David earnestly longed: "*One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.*"

3d. Simeon had a promise, "*that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ;*" the accomplishment of which we have in the words of the text. The fulfillment of God's promises is certain, therefore all the followers of Christ may confidently trust in the word of the God of truth, for he is always as good as his promise. He promised Simeon that he should see the Lord's Christ, and he had not merely a sight of him, but he had him in his arms, and near his heart.

4th. Simeon took the infant Saviour in his arms, and pressed him as near his heart as he possibly could. And the soul that meets with Christ in the ordinances of God's house, takes him in the arms of his faith, presses him to his heart, and gives him the highest place in his affections.

In the discussion of the subject, we shall—

I. Speak of the faith which embraces Christ.

II. When the believer takes Christ in his arms of faith.

III. Some of the effects of this meeting.

I. The faith that embraces Christ. And here we would observe, that nature cannot produce it, but it is implanted in the heart by the Holy Spirit of God; hence in Scripture it is styled "*precious faith*"—"*The faith of God's elect*"—"*Faith that works by love*"—"*Faith that purifies the heart*," &c.

This faith the sinner cannot exercise by the operation of his natural powers upon the truth of God's word and promise, for such a faith devils and damned reprobates may possess. The unconverted sinner is as incapable of acting faith or laying hold of Christ, as a man born blind is of opening his eyes and beholding the natural light, or as a dead corpse is of performing the works of a living man.

The faith that unites the soul to Christ presupposes a thorough conviction of sin, which breaks up the fountains of the great deep of the heart, lays open the secret dens of hidden wickedness, and renders a Christless state intolerable. It implies a despair of help from any created arm, and that the sinner is dead to all hope in himself. Faith implies a knowledge of Christ—"*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true*

God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." It implies a view of the divine glory, manifested in Christ—"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Christ, by his spirit, opens the understanding of the sinner to discover the spirituality of God's word, and to see the fulness, suitableness and preciousness of Christ in his two natures, person and offices of prophet, priest and king. Therefore,

It implies the full and cheerful consent of the heart to receive Christ in all his offices, to accept of salvation on God's terms, and to part with all things for this pearl of great price, and the soul's living and depending on Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

But, to render the subject as plain as possible, we shall mention a number of scriptural expressions by which the nature and operations of faith are illustrated: thus, John styles it, a *receiving* of Christ. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name." From this passage, it is evident that Christ is the free gift of the Father, presented to us in the gospel, and he is ours, when we accept of him. It is called, a flying for refuge to the hope set before us: "Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." This expression has a particular allusion to the man slayer, under the law, who fled from the avenger of blood. The pursued person was not to turn aside to any of the cities of Israel; he was not to flee to his own house, nor to the temple, but to the city of refuge. So, the awakened sinner must fly to Christ, the only hiding place from the storm and covert from the tempest of God's wrath. The curse of the law and the flaming sword of divine justice pursue the sinner, and there is no hiding place in earth or heaven but in Jesus Christ, who stands with outstretched arms and yearning bowels, while Gethsemane's agonies and Calvary's dying groans proclaim his willingness to receive and shelter even the chief of sinners. As the man slayer, when he entered the city of refuge, was secure, so the sinner who has fled to Christ is in perfect safety, for justice is satisfied, and all the attributes of God are glorified by the death of Jesus. It is called a submitting to the righteousness of God: they "*have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.*" What a condescending expression! Shall it be termed submission for a condemned criminal to accept of a pardon, or for a person destitute of clothes to accept of a garment? The expression plainly points out the arrogant pride of the heart of man. While we are in a state of nature, we imagine ourselves completely covered with a perfect robe of righteousness of our own manufacture; like the Laodiceans, we think

that we are “rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing;” and we disdain to be obliged to another for his righteousness; but when the sinner, by faith, lays hold of Christ, all these towering imaginations are levelled with the dust, and he counts “all things but dung that he may win Christ;” “Not having his own righteousness, but the righteousness of God by faith;” and the language of his heart is, “In the Lord have I righteousness.”

It is called a taking hold of God’s covenant: “Take hold of my covenant.” The gospel may be compared to a rope cast among a number of drowning men;—God, by his ministers, cries to perishing sinners, who are sinking into the gulf of hell, “TAKE HOLD OF MY COVENANT,” and I will deliver you from going down into the pit. When a sinner believes in Christ, he takes hold of this rope of salvation, the covenant of grace, like Jeremiah, who took hold of the cords let down to him in the pit; on this he lays his whole weight, saying, “this is all my salvation and all my desire;” on this I trust my perishing soul.

It is called the opening of the heart to Christ: “Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me.” When Lydia believed on Christ, it is said, “The Lord opened her heart.” This expression implies that the heart of the sinner is barred and bolted against Christ, but no sooner does he by faith view his beauty and excellency than the doors of the understanding and affections fly open, and the King of glory enters in with all his heavenly train. It is termed a feeding on Christ: “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” This expression implies that the believer takes hold of Christ and applies him to his own particular case, as a starving man takes food and eats it.

It is termed “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” It is to the believer what bonds, deeds and charters are to the man of business, which, although only so many pieces of paper, are the substance and certain evidence of wealth and riches; so the word and promise of God are the believer’s bonds, or the evidence of his right to “a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” It is called a looking unto Christ: “They shall look upon me whom they pierced;” and in the text it is represented as an embraceng of Christ: “Then took he him up in his arms.” Siimeon took Christ in his bodily arms, but it was his embracing him in the arms of faith which caused him to bless God; and of the arms of faith, we would notice the following particulars:

1st. They are leaning arms; they hold by Christ in his word and promises: they rest upon him as upon an immovable rock. As a sickly female clasps her arms around her beloved husband, and leans upon him while his strength is sufficient to support and

bear her along, so faith leans upon Christ, and depends upon his all-sufficiency for all things necessary for time and eternity.— And this is the meaning of these words, “*Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?*” “*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.*”

2d. They are winning arms; hence saith the Apostle, “*I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but dung, that I may win Christ.*” Saith Christ, “*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*” This evidently alludes to the believer’s parting with all the pleasures of this world that he may win Christ. Faith is such a winning grace that it is always receiving from Christ’s fulness “*grace for grace.*” It digs into the Rock of Ages and finds unsearchable treasure; it sometimes views the heavenly Canaan, and fills the heart with “*joy unspeakable, and full of glory.*”

3d. They are capacious arms. The world, with all its pomp and splendor, cannot fill them. Nothing short of God in Christ can do this. Saith the Apostle, “*I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.*” Indeed all the glories of heaven, without Christ, could not satisfy the believing soul. Saith the Psalmist, “*whom have I in heaven but thee?*”

4th. They are grasping arms; they not only stretch wide and embrace much, but they hold fast what they get. Saith the spouse, “*I held him fast, and would not let him go.*” They take hold of the omnipotent God and will not let him go, even when he seems to shake himself loose; a plain example of this we have in the case of Jacob, who took hold of the angel of the covenant; and what is truly wonderful, the Creator becomes a suppliant to his creature, saying, “*Let me go;*” but the faith of Jacob replies, “*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me;*” as if he should say—The day may break, the night may come, and the day may break again, yet “*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*” And thus poor, helpless Jacob, and the all-sufficient and compassionate God, will not part until the blessing come. By the strength of the prayer of faith, “*he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto him.*” In like manner, the faith of Moses holds back the sin avenging arm of Jehovah: “*Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them.*” “*And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people? Turn from thy fierce wrath and repent of this evil against thy people. And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.*” By faith Joshua in-

verted the laws of nature and stopped the sun and moon in their courses; by faith Elijah shut and opened the heavens; by faith the prison door opened to Peter, and the chains fell from his hands and feet; in a word, the arms of faith embrace Christ, and they never let go their hold—the first hold that faith takes of Christ, unites the soul to him forever. Saith the apostle, “*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*” “*I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

5th. The arms of faith are active. True, they do not work for reward on the footing of the old covenant; all their exertions are like those of the beggar when he receives alms without money and without price. Faith manifests its heavenly origin by a cheerful and unreserved obedience to all the commands of God. It delights in the law of God, and takes the sweetest pleasure in the paths of duty; in a word, “*as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.*”

6th. The arms of faith are fighting and victorious; therefore, the apostle, speaking of the Old Testament worthies, says that, “*through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*” By the arms of faith, the feeble Christian leans upon Omnipotence, and thereby gains a complete victory over the world, the flesh and the devil. Faith gains all its victories through the blood of the Lamb. Saith the apostle Paul, “*I can do all through Christ, who strengtheneth me.*” Hence, as Rutherford says, “a poor milk maid in the chimney corner, by the prayer of faith, can do more for the church of Christ, than a general with a hundred thousand men; for, by one act of faith, she sets all the wheels of Omnipotence to work.”

II. When the believer takes Christ in his arms of faith, he embraces him in his conversion; when the almighty arm of Jesus snatches him as a brand from the burning, draws him from the horrible pit and the miry clay, and sets him upon the Rock of Ages, view him upon the brink of a burning hell, the hopes of mercy almost gone, scarce a peradventure left; the arrows of the Almighty sticking fast in his heart, poisoning and drinking up his spirits, the burning beams of the wrath of God falling upon his soul, and the forebodings of hell racking his conscience; see him lost to all hope in himself, making this last resolve, I will go to Jesus, and if I perish, I will perish at his feet; when all appears dark, gloomy and hopeless, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus breaks into his soul: the

glorious plan of salvation is laid open to his view; by faith he beholds the precious loving Jesus arrayed in all the boundless glories and excellencies of the Godhead, able to save unto the uttermost, a Saviour suited exactly to his desperate case, and with joy he accepts of him on the terms upon which he is offered in the gospel, viz: freely, fully, cordially and affectionately, without money and without price; that is, without any recommending qualifications. Says the sinner, this Christ just suits me, and that moment his heart yields; and when by faith he views this precious Saviour, all his burden of sin and guilt is carried away and lost in the red sea of divine blood, and joy and peace flow like a stream from the Eternal Throne into his soul. When faith views Christ as truly God and truly man, possessed of all the perfections of the Godhead and of every excellency of which human nature is capable, then his language is, he is precious. None but Christ will do for me. "*Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon the earth I desire beside thee.*" When faith views the effects of the mediation of Jesus Christ, viz: justification, sanctification, glorification and eternal life, and the believer feels the Spirit of God bearing witness with his spirit that his sins are pardoned, that God is his father reconciled in Christ, and he can cry, "*Abba, Father, my Lord and my God,*" then created language cannot describe the feelings of his heart, then like aged Simeon he embraces Christ, he presses him to his heart and he blesses God.

2d. The believer sometimes takes Christ in the arms of faith and embraces him, when, like aged Simeon, he comes to the house of God, and the word being faithfully preached, is carried with power to his soul, enlightening his understanding, giving him a Pisgah view of the promised land, and clear evidences of his interest in that glorious inheritance purchased by the blood of Christ.

3d. The believer takes Christ in his arms, when exercised in the furnace of affliction, he is visited by Christ, as in the case of Jacob, when to the view of sense and reason all things are against him. O how sweet is a smile from Christ at such a time! and what a heaven upon earth is it then to embrace him in the arms of faith! thus Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego had Christ in their arms when they were thrown into Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. When Daniel was cast into the lion's den, by faith he embraced Christ; when Paul and Silas were confined in the dungeon, they had Christ in their arms and sung psalms at midnight; when John was in the isle of Patmos, and Christ appeared to him in his glory, he embraced him in the arms of faith; and when the blessed martyrs were dying with the most excruciating pains, they had Christ in their arms of faith, and thereby were enabled to triumph over death in its most terrific

form, and declared to the spectators that in the midst of flames and faggots they experienced no more pain than if they were lying on a bed of roses.

4th. The believer sometimes meets Christ and embraces him in the arms of faith when he is seated at a communion table, then by faith, he sees a mangled, bleeding, dying, rising, triumphant Jesus, heading his own table, and feasting his blood-bought children with the bread of life and the milk and honey of Canaan. Then faith views him in ineffable glory with a crown upon his head, arrayed in the dyed garments of salvation, with his vesture dipped in blood, and *that name written upon his robe and upon his thigh*, "THE KING OF KINGS, AND THE LORD OF LORDS."

The believer embraces Christ in the arms of faith in the hour of death, when his body is about to return to the dust, and his soul to wing its flight to his Father's house. O believer, how sweet will it be to die with Christ in your arms! then death will have no terror for you, then like Moses you will die in the embraces of God, and like Stephen you will behold "*the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;*" and you will be enabled to sing the victor's song, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

III. The effects of the believer's meeting with and embracing Christ. When Simeon met with Christ at the temple, he took him in his arms and blessed God, and the moment the believer embraces Christ, he praises God. No sooner was David drawn from the horrible pit and miry clay, and his feet placed on the Rock of Ages, than a new song was in his mouth, "praises to our God." When the Ethiopian Eunuch found Christ, he went on his way rejoicing, and many are the songs of praise uttered by the believer when he embraces Christ in the arms of faith, thus he sings the everlasting and unmerited love of God; when the soul is enlightened to behold the transcendent beauty of Deity, when he sees his sin, his word, his law, and the plan of salvation, in all their excellency, then he is in love and wonder; when he beholds the horrid depravity and misery of the human race, and considers the wonderful condescension of Jehovah, displayed in the plan of their salvation, then the language of his heart is, "O how infinite is that love which influenced the Eternal Jehovah to look upon such a worthless wretch as I, weltering in my blood." And did he look with an eye of compassion upon me among the many millions of Adam's ruined race, upon me, who, if possible, was more guilty, abominable and deserving of hell than all the rest:—Did Jesus undertake my cause infinite ages before I had an existence? O amazing and unutterable grace! Let me sink into nothing before the Eternal All, for I am lost in wonder, love and praise!

When Christ is in the believer's arms, he possesses his highest affections, then he is on his lips, and is the subject matter of all his songs of praise; and it is not wonderful that Christ should possess the affections, and that his name should be upon the lips of the believer, when we reflect that he became his surety, assumed his nature, wept in Bethlehem, sweat blood in agony in Gethsemane, and groaned and died on Calvary, shedding the last drop of his precious blood as the price of his ransom. No wonder that Christ should be the subject matter of the believer's songs of praise, when he burst the bars of death, rose triumphant, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, and has gone to heaven to prepare a place for all his blood bought purchase. The burning throne of justice has been sprinkled with his blood, and Jehovah now appears clothed in love. The enlightening, convicting, and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit now flow like "*a pure river of water, clear as crystal, from the throne of God and the Lamb.*" Jesus Christ purchased all temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings for his people; he is infinitely amiable and excellent in his person, nature and offices; therefore it is not wonderful that he should be the subject matter of the believer's songs of praise; when by faith they embrace him in this world, and when they arrive at their Father's house, heaven will ring with their loud and everlasting acclamations of praise and glory to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb forever. Amen.

SERMON IX.

THE EXPERIENCE AND PRIVILEGES OF THE TRUE BELIEVER.

There is now therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit..—ROMANS viii. 1.

As one star differs from another in magnitude, so the epistle to the Romans has a greater lustre and beauty than many other parts of the sacred volume; and the eighth chapter seems to possess a beauty and dignity transcending every other part of the epistle. This chapter contains a short synopsis of all the leading doctrines of the cross. Here, the whole eternal scheme of redemption is marked out from its origin in the eternal counsels of the Deity, until its termination in the glorification and eternal blessedness of all who are purchased by the blood of Christ. The eternal electing love of God, effectual calling, justification, and glorification, are here represented as being inseparably connected, like the links of a chain; therefore, the chapter begins with “*no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,*” and concludes with “*no separation from the love of God.*”

In this chapter we have the most plain and decisive characteristics of the heaven-born Christian; by which all the followers of Christ may prove their union to him, and read their title to their blood-bought inheritance in the heavenly paradise. Here you may find the rich clusters of the sweet promises of God, hanging on Christ Jesus, the living vine, fraught with the new wine of Canaan. Here Christ’s sufferings and death, his triumphant resurrection and ascension to the mediatorial throne, and his all prevailing intercession with the Father, are laid down as the grand basis of the believer’s hope, and the inexhaustible source of his happiness, in time and through eternity. Here we are informed that all the persons in the Trinity, all the attributes of

the Deity, with all his eternal councils, and all the unsearchable providences of God, are engaged in behalf of true believers, a view of which, causes the apostle to cry out, “*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?*” “*It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?*” “*It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*” *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*” “*I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

In the preceding chapter, the apostle gives us a brief narrative of his spiritual exercises. He begins with his first awakenings, and relates not only the work of conversion, but also states his conflicts with the remaining corruptions of his fallen nature, in the progressive work of sanctification; and although he had many hard struggles, with a body of sin and death, yet upon an impartial self-examination, he declares, that he did not wilfully sin, but that he delighted in the law of God after the inner man; that with his mind he served the law of God, and that he felt the remains of sin in his soul as a filthy and loathsome distemper which he hated, and longed to be delivered from, as from a dead, putrid, and rotten carcase, crawling with filthy vermin. From these considerations he proves his gracious state, and having glorified God that he was united to Christ, in the words of the text, he shows the unspeakable privileges, and indescribable blessings to which he was entitled by virtue of that union.

In the text three things are asserted of all genuine Christians; 1st. Their blessed condition; “*They are in Christ Jesus; they have fled to the city of refuge; they are in the strong hold, appointed for the prisoners of hope.*” Says the Holy Spirit, “*The name of the Lord is a strong tower, and the righteous run into it, and are safe.*” Again, “*They shall dwell on high; their place of defence shall be the munition of rocks*”—“*the strong impregnable rocks of the divine attributes.*”

2d. The blessed consequence of being in Christ. They are freed from condemnation; they are under the covert of Christ’s blood and righteousness; Christ has magnified the law and made it honorable; justice has received complete satisfaction in the streaming blood, and dying agonies of the incarnate God; God, the Father, is well pleased with the believing sinners, for the sake of the righteousness of his Son Jesus; therefore they are freed from condemnation, “*for who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?*”

3d. The evidence of their being in Christ expressed in a two-fold manner.

1st. Negatively. "*They walk not after the flesh,*" sin is the object of their abhorrence. The depraved appetites of the fallen nature; are so contrary to the heaven-born principles implanted in their souls, that they flee from them as from the dagger of a murderer; therefore, they do not choose them, delight in them, or go after their gratification: hence, it is said, with propriety, "*They walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*"

2d. But positively, they walk after the spirit, that is, they are bound for the better country; they are travelling home to God, on the narrow way that leads to life; they walk in the footsteps of Jesus; their path is hedged in by the law and gospel, and the Holy Spirit is their guide; therefore, they "*walk after the spirit.*"

In further attending to the subject, I will,

I. Explain the phrase, "*In Christ Jesus.*"

II. Speak of the progressive life of sanctification, which is here expressed by not walking "*after the flesh.*"

III. Mention some of the consequences attending those, who walk "*not after the flesh, but after the spirit.*"

I. The phrase "*In Christ.*" This phrase is frequently used in the New Testament as one of the most distinguishing peculiarities of the people of God; and particularly expressive of their heaven-born nature: "*If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.*" "*Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.*" "*Yea,*" Saith the Spirit, "*they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.*" "*Them also who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.*"

The phrase "*In Christ Jesus,*" is expressive

1st. Of that strict, inseparable union, which subsists between Jesus Christ and his spiritual children; hence, they are said to be in him, or united to him, as the branch is to the vine. Christ is frequently represented in Scripture as the head, and they, the members of his mystical body. This union is so intimate, wonderful and endearing, that they are said to be "*one with him,*" as he is "*one with the Father.*"

2d. To be in Christ Jesus is expressive of their entire dependence on him for pardon, justification, sanctification and eternal life: Christ is the Lord, their righteousness. Says the prophet Jeremiah, "*This is the name whereby he shall be called; The Lord, our righteousness.*" And says the apostle Paul, "*But of him, ye are in Christ, who of God, is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*" Says Isaiah, "*Surely shall one*

say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength?" The Psalmist tells us, "That in his righteousness they shall be exalted;" and saith the apostle, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

But to sum up the whole in one word; to be in Christ Jesus signifies the relation in which his people stand to him, as their covenant head. When first created, God entered into a covenant with Adam, as representative of all his posterity. The condition of this covenant, on Adam's part, was perfect obedience; the promise on God's part, was eternal life. Now, had Adam kept that covenant, and perfectly performed the conditions thereof, he would have secured eternal life, for himself and all his posterity, as effectually as he deprived himself and them of it, by the breach of that covenant; and as he was their covenant head, they are said to be in Adam: First, all mankind were seminally in him, as their root or natural cause of existence. Again, they were in him, as their public representative; for their eternal life, or eternal death, depended on his performing, or not performing the conditions of that covenant.

Jesus Christ, the second Adam, undertook the redemption of fallen man, in the early counsels of eternity; he engaged to assume our fallen and degraded nature, and thus to fulfill the law, and satisfy divine justice, in the room of his elect: To work out a perfect righteousness, for their pardon and justification; that God might be "*just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*" In this respect, all believers are in Christ, as their covenant head; for, as the first Adam represented all his natural seed, so the second Adam represented all his spiritual seed.—This seems to be the very idea of the apostle, when he says: "*As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*" And again, "*So by the obedience of one, many are made righteous.*"

As Adam's natural seed were seminally in him in the first covenant, as their natural root, and federally in him, as their public head, so in the second covenant, all Christ's spiritual seed are virtually in him, as their spiritual root, and actually in him, as their "*City of refuge—their hiding place, and strong tower.*"

That they were virtually in Christ, as their new covenant head, before they had an existence, is evident, from the words of eternal truth: "*As he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame, before him in love.*"

That they were in Christ, as the wheat is in the grain, that was buried in the earth, is evident from the words of Christ himself: "*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*" If Christ had never died, none of the sons and daughters of Adam could have entered heaven. But Jesus died to give life, eternal life, to many millions. Christ died, and was laid in the grave, as the corn of wheat is buried in the earth. And O, what an increase! what an astonishing crop springs up from our dying Christ! innumerable millions of living Christians; an exceeding great multitude, that no man can number; a multitude like the sand by the sea shore—redeemed out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people upon the earth.

But, when they receive Christ, by faith, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, they are actually in him as their great covenant head; their infinite, inexhaustible, and eternal fountain of life, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily; and, therefore, Christ is all in all to his children; by his merits they are pardoned and accepted with God; by his righteousness they stand justified before God; by his Spirit they are sanctified and prepared for their heavenly inheritance.—Christ's Word and Spirit, like a cloud and pillar of fire, guide their feet in the narrow way, and almighty grace gives them the victory over sin, death and hell, and at last puts them in possession of their everlasting rest.

But, to illustrate the subject more plainly, we shall offer a few observations: and,

1. All mankind by nature are in the first Adam, and involved with him, in the ruins of the first covenant. It is evident, that the first Adam entailed two dreadful evils on all his unhappy offspring, viz:

1st. The curse and penalty of the broken covenant.

2d. A disposition to seek eternal life, on the footing of that covenant.

That all mankind by nature are fallen creatures, spiritually dead, and obnoxious both to temporal and eternal death, is a truth which no one can deny, who knows his own heart, and views the depravity and wickedness of mankind in every age and generation of the world, or who consults God's written word.

Again: It is very evident, that every individual of Adam's race (while in a state of nature,) tries to seek salvation, and expects happiness on the principles of the old covenant, from his own good works. One says, "I am a good member of civil society, therefore I expect to be happy after death." Says a second, "It is true, that I do many wrong things, but I also do many good ones; and I am certain my good actions are far more numerous

than my evil ones: I have a very large balance in my favor; consequently, I expect to be saved." Says a third, "I am just and upright. I defy the world, to lay any thing to my charge; therefore, I am certain of heaven." And says a fourth, "I am sensible that I am a sinner. It is true, I have led a wicked life, but then I do as well as I can; moreover, I expect to reform, and become a good Christian before I die." These and fifty other classes might be mentioned, who are all trusting in their own righteousness, and depending on the law, as a covenant of works for their salvation, while the God-exalting and creature-humbling plan of redemption, through the merits of Christ, appears in their view both mean and contemptible.

Before any of the sons or daughters of Adam will renounce their own righteousness, and submit to the terms of sovereign mercy, they must be cut off and totally divorced from the old covenant, by the Almighty power and agency of the Divine Spirit. In order to accomplish this important purpose, the sinner's eyes must be opened to see his lost, guilty condition; and this is done by the Holy Spirit, in a day of power. Now the sinner sees that he is guilty, condemned, and exposed to the torments of hell; immediately he works for life, on the principles of the old covenant. First, he reforms his life; he breaks off from swearing, drinking, Sabbath breaking, gaming, dancing, &c., and now he imagines all is well with him. But the Divine Spirit brings the law, with greater light and power, to his conscience, and shows him that this negative righteousness is a bed too short to stretch himself on, and a covering too narrow to wrap himself in. Still cleaving to the old covenant, the sinner now betakes himself to a diligent and punctual attendance on all the external duties of religion; he prays in secret and in his family; he reads the Scriptures, and attends the preaching of the word upon every occasion. Now his conscience begins to take ease, and he makes a Christ of his duties. But the Holy Spirit lays open to his view the secret evil and hidden wickedness of his heart, and convinces him that his state is unclean, polluted and vile, still cleaving to the old covenant. The sinner now tries to amend his amendments, and to reform his reformations; he endeavors to patch the ragged garment of his own righteousness; he tries to have his heart deeply affected in every duty; when he prays, he is quite dissatisfied, unless he feels some more than common enlargement; when he hears a sermon, he is quite uneasy, unless he can shed tears; and his heart is deeply affected. Here his conscience takes ease, and he makes a Christ of his tears, enlargements, and melting frames. But the Holy Spirit of God redoubles the light of conviction; breaks up the fountain of the great deep of his depraved heart; shows him his pride, hypocrisy, atheism, legality and unbelief, his vile affections and

filthy imaginations, with ten thousand other abominations he never discovered before. Now he weeps and prays, and cries for mercy; he strives as for life, to cleanse this Augean stable, and, like a man using every possible exertion to build a dam across a rapid current, he piles up an immense bank of duties, prayers, tears, resolutions and desires, to stop the impetuous flood of in-dwelling sin and in-bred corruption; till at length he meets with some surprising enlargement. Now his heart is melted; he is all tenderness; he is filled with a lively flow of affections; and he can pour out his soul in the sweetest enlargement in prayer; all his burden and distress appear to be quite gone, and still cleaving to the old covenant, he takes ease to his conscience, and makes a Christ of the peace, joy, and satisfaction he feels; but when these have measurably subsided, at the root of his false hope there is a secret sentiment of condemnation; conscience secretly tells him, there is something in religion of which he is ignorant; every practical, experimental and searching sermon condemns him; when he hears the new birth described, and the believer's first views of Christ, with their subsequent effects and consequences, he finds a dark spot in his experience, that blasts his hope. In order to dislodge him from his refuge of lies, the Holy Spirit now sends the light of conviction, with redoubled vigor, into his soul; he shows him that he has no foundation in the whole word of God, for a hope of religion; that all his joys and hopes are wild delusions; that his whole nature is sin; his heart filled with enmity and hatred against God; that he has no more power to think a good thought, or do a good action, or to command one holy desire, or pious affection, than he has to create a world, or raise the dead from their graves. Now he beholds the flaming sword of divine justice, unsheathed and pointed at his guilty heart; now vengeance frowns, and hell gapes to receive him to her burning centre; now he asks from the heart, *What shall I do to be saved?* The ministers of the gospel, God's Word, and his Holy Spirit say to him, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*"

He tries to obey the commands of the gospel, but still, upon the principles of the old covenant, he endeavors to spin a faith out of his own bowels; but faith, in its very nature, appears to be a dark mystery. Christ, the glorious object of faith, is entirely an unknown object; all is dark as midnight. He can no more keep the law, than he can create a world; and he can no more believe or act faith, than he can raise the dead. And what shall he do? When he is dead to all hope in himself; stripped of his own righteousness, as naked as the new-born infant; when he feels a Christless state intolerable; when he can live no longer without Christ; when he can do nothing, but, like the poor pub-

lican, cry, "*Lord, be merciful to me a sinner;*" like sinking Peter, "*Lord, save, or I perish;*" like blind Bartimeus, "*Jesus of Nazareth, thou son of David, have mercy on me;*" or, like the poor Leper, "*Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*" Often in the most dismal, hopeless, helpless, desperate time, the glorious, rich provision of the New Testament is unveiled; God, who at first commanded the light to shine out of darkness, now shines into his heart; and gives him "*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ Jesus.*" Now he discovers the glory, beauty, preciousness, suitableness, and sufficiency of Christ Jesus, the blessed new covenant head.

When Christ opens the eyes of the blind, it is easy to see things as God sees them; faith now views Christ in his person and two natures, and in all his mediatorial offices; a precious, glorious, able, suitable, willing Saviour; just such a Saviour as he needs; such a one as suits his hopeless, helpless, desperate case. By faith he views the city of refuge;—the hiding place from the storm of divine vengeance; "*The strong tower;*" "*the strong hold for the prisoners of hope.*" He feels himself under the covert of Christ's blood and righteousness. Now he can say with the apostle, "*Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God*"—"*Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*" Now the soul is divorced from the old covenant, and married to Christ, the heavenly bridegroom. He is totally stripped of his filthy garments, the rags and tatters of his own righteousness; and is clothed in linen, white and clean; the white robes of Christ's perfect law, fulfilling righteousness. Now he is in Christ Jesus—"*He is a new creature, old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new;*" "*and now, therefore, there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.*"

II. Speak of the progressive life of sanctification: which is here expressed, by not walking after the flesh, which is the effect of the soul's being in Christ. A living fountain will always send forth a vital stream. The existence of the soul implies constant emission of light. The existence of animal life will unavoidably manifest itself by breathing, action, appetite, and sensation. So spiritual life, union to Christ, or being Christ, will manifest itself by the motions, actions, and operations of the heaven born nature. Regeneration and sanctification are as inseparably connected, as the cause and effect; the one is the incontestable proof of the other. Therefore, alluding to the statement in our text, the believing soul's being in Christ, is manifest-

ed by two evidences; first negatively; "*he walks not after the flesh.*" Second, positively; "*he walks after the spirit.*"

Flesh and spirit, according to the language of the New Testament, signify nature and grace; or the old nature and the new.

Flesh is universally taken to express the depravity of man's nature, its total enmity and contrariety to the nature of God; because, the filthy, depraved appetites, passions and propensities of fallen nature, which rule, govern and tyrannize over the rational powers and faculties of man, have their existence in the flesh or bodily part. Hence the highest end of the unconverted sinner, like the brute, is to indulge and gratify his base propensities; and this is what is meant by "*walking after the flesh.*" But one of the distinguishing peculiarities of the people of God is, that they do not "*walk after the flesh.*"

Those who are in Christ Jesus do not go after strong drink, or the gratification of a filthy appetite for spirituous liquors, as the swine goes after the swill trough. We are told, "*that they have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts;*" "*whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, they do all to the glory of God.*" They that are in Christ Jesus, do not indulge themselves in filthy obscenit conversation, or impure thoughts, words or actions; but their aim is, to keep their bodies pure, as fit temples for the Holy Ghost.

They do not pursue the world and the perishing things of time, as their portion, regardless of God and a future state, like the swine that labors late and early, to fill himself with the acorns that fall from the trees, without ever lifting his eyes towards the God that bestows them. They that are in Christ Jesus have set their affections on things above. Like the old patriarchs, they are seeking "*a better country;*" that is, a heavenly one; and while in this world, they feel themselves as pilgrims and strangers, in a dreary wilderness.

They that are in Christ do not indulge themselves in anger, wrath, hatred, revenge, or a disposition to bite and devour, like the wolf or the tiger. No, they love their enemies; they bless those that curse them; and they pray for them that despitefully use them, and persecute them.

But positively, they walk "*after the Spirit.*" By the Spirit here, we understand the Holy Ghost, the third person of the ever blessed Trinity, the richest boon God ever bestowed upon the unworthy sons and daughters of Adam. Hence, says the blessed Jesus, "*I will pray the Father, and he will send you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it sceth him not, neither knoweth him.*"

Walking after the Spirit implies that the Spirit goes before, and the soul that is in Christ, follows after; therefore, the idea is, that the renewed soul is led by the Spirit; “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*” Here an important question arises, viz: what is the path in which the Spirit leads those that are in Christ Jesus? I answer, it is the narrow way that leads to eternal life; the path which begins at the strait gate of conversion, and ends at the pearly gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. Saith Christ, “*Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*” It is the way of holiness and self-denial, the sure way mentioned by Isaiah: “*And an high way shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*” It is the way that Abel, the first martyr, travelled home to God; it is the way that Enoch walked with God three hundred years; the way that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, together with all the prophets, apostles and martyrs, travelled home to the heavenly country; hence it is called, “**THE GOOD OLD WAY.**” “*Thus saith the Lord, stand in the ways and see; ask for the good old paths: the good old way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls.*”

It is the way of deep humility. Our Lord tells us, that all who travel this way must humble themselves, and become as little children.

It is a way of close watching and fervent praying; dangers stand thick on every side; the lions and dragons of hell infest every part of it; a subtle and malicious devil, with unwearied diligence, is engaged day and night, to accomplish the ruin of them that travel there; the world, with all its ensnaring temptations, is engaged to entangle and lead them from God; and what is worse than all, the remains of corruption, (a dreadful body of sin and death,) infests them; through all these dangerous enemies have the followers of Christ to bend their course. Hence Jesus admonishes all who travel this way, to “**WATCH AND PRAY,**” lest they enter into temptation. It is the way of self-denial and mortification. They that travel this way must part with all for Christ; they must cut off their right hand, and pluck out their right eye; they must part with the love and practice of every sin, and boldly encounter all the oppositions that earth and hell, men and devils, can put in their way. Hence says Christ, “*If any man come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.*”

It is a way of hard, laborious exertions, in the use of all the means and ordinances God has appointed, and humble obedience to all his commands. The soul that travels this way must spend his life in watching and praying, repenting and believing, doing

the will of God, seeking Christ's presence, travelling by faith, between his own emptiness and Christ's unwasted fullness.—Hence the apostle exhorts all who travel this way, *to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling; while, at the same time, it is God that works in them, both to will and to do of his good pleasure*; that is, the person who walks in this way, strives and labors in the use of means with as much diligence, industry and perseverance, as if he were working for eternal life; and when he does all he can, he views it but as dross, dung, and filthy rags, in point of justification or acceptance with God.—He keeps the law and obeys the commands of God, as if he expected eternal life as his reward; and yet he views himself as an unprofitable servant; he depends no more upon duty than he does upon sin.

Here another question arises, viz: To what does the Spirit of God lead his people? I answer,

1st. The Spirit leads them to the true knowledge of God, of Christ, and of the divine law. He also shows them the spiritual beauty, and imparts to their souls the precious sweetness of God's word. This Christ promised to his disciples, in the gift of the Spirit, and told them that, as a part of his work, "*He shall guide you into all truth*"—"*He shall take of mine, and show it to you.*" He sometimes causes the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ Jesus, to shine into their hearts, and enables them to see the intrinsic beauty and excellency of the attributes of God, till their souls are attracted and enraptured with the glory of the divine character. He reveals to them the beauty of Christ until their souls rejoice, with "*joy unspeakable, and full of glory.*" He sometimes opens their understandings (as in the case of the two disciples travelling to Emmaus,) to understand the Scriptures, to see Christ in his word and promises, to see the evidences, exercises and experiences of God's people, as they are laid down in his holy word; sometimes he leads them to the top of Mount Pisgah, and gives them a faith's view of the promised land; he gives them a taste of heaven upon earth, and enables them by faith to pluck the sweet fruits of Canaan, which grow upon the tree of life, in the midst of the Paradise of God.

2d. The Spirit leads the people of God into the valley of humility; where in both the glass of the law and in that of the gospel, by the light of God's holiness, he shows them their vileness and polluted loathsomeness; he discovers to them their secret dens of sin, their accursed things, their horrid backslidings and base ingratitude; and when they compare these soul mortifying views with their former joys and comforts, they are often filled with gloomy fears, and feel an aching void, which none but Christ can fill. Now they adopt the language of Job. "*O that*

it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon my tabernacle. O that I knew where I would find him."

3d. The Holy Spirit often leads his people into the furnace of affliction. Sometimes the angry powers of hell are let loose upon them, and for a time, they fall a prey to the rage and malice of devils and wicked men: Again, he suffers their sweetest earthly comforts to be snatched from them; often they are encircled by losses and bitter afflictions, until, like Jacob, they think all these things are against them. But, however bitter the cup may be to the taste, and however gloomy these dispensations may appear, still God's eternal purposes of love and mercy are going exactly straight; though he leads them in a way they know not, yet he takes this method to brighten the vessels of mercy, preparing for glory, so that they will soon be fitted to furnish out their Father's house, in the heavenly Canaan; and even in the midst of their sorest afflictions, some of the leaves of the tree of life, which grows in the midst of the Paradise of God, and are for the healing of the nations, are thrown into the bitter waters of Marah; and then they taste as sweet as the milk and honey of Canaan. Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego in the fiery furnace—Daniel in the lion den—Paul and Silas in the dungeon—John in the Isle of Patmos—and thousands more, could tell you what a heaven upon earth affliction is, when the soul feels the love of Christ, his smiles and life-giving presence.

4th. The Holy Spirit leads the children of God into the exercise of deep repentance and contrition. Occasionally he gives them a faith's view of a crucified Christ; and when the Divine Spirit discovers to them the pardoning love of God, through the painful agonies and bloody sufferings of a crucified Jesus; and shows sin in its filthy, loathsome and abominable nature; all this breaks and melts their hearts into penitential sorrow; they weep and mourn, and sink into the dust before God; they loathe and hate themselves; and, like Job, they repent and abhor themselves in dust and ashes, while they are filled with wonder that such polluted worms should ever find mercy; and each views himself as the chief debtor to free grace, and the greatest wonder of redeeming love.

5th. The Holy Spirit leads his people into the exercise of spiritual prayer. They daily carry to the throne of grace, the state of their own wretched backsliding hearts, that of their Christless children, friends and neighbors, and the afflictions and distresses of the church of God. The Spirit often leads them to be restless and importunate, like the widow who came to the unjust judge; to hold fast by the promises of God, and take no denial; like Moses, to turn every repulse into an argu-

ment; and in this sweet employment, they often experience many blessed answers of prayer, and many precious love-tokens from Christ.

6th. The Spirit leads the people of God to a holy contempt of the honors, profits and pleasures of this fading world; he leads them to feel a heavenly content in whatever lot the eternal God has placed them; to a blessed covenant, sweetness in every earthly comfort; to view every drop of water and every morsel of bread as the purchase of the dying agonies of Christ.—He leads them to a daily warfare with in-dwelling sin; like faithful soldiers, to fight with principalities and powers; and thus he leads them on to final victory, and makes them more than conquerors through the blood of the Lamb.

He leads them through the dark valley and shadow of death, and he often causes them to sing the song of triumph, in the midst of the swellings of Jordan. When he lets the light of his glory shine upon their souls, their dying is sweet. Death is only going home, a pleasant passage from a dreary wilderness to a celestial Paradise; from a noisome dungeon to an eternal, never-fading crown: to an inheritance "*incorruptible, undivided, and that fadeth not away.*" But as they walk after the Spirit, so he leads them, at last, to their Father's house, the place to which Jesus went nearly eighteen hundred years ago, to prepare a place for them. He brings them to the full possession of that kingdom which was prepared for them "*from the foundation of the world;*" where they shall wear eternal, never-fading crowns: where through all eternity they shall walk the pavements of the new Jerusalem, in the immediate vision and full fruition of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

III. Mention some of the consequences attending those who walk after the Spirit.

1st. Their situation is happy beyond expression: for they are in the strong hold; their dwelling is the munition of rocks. As the apostle says, "*God is for them, and who can be against them?*" All the adorable persons of the Godhead are on their side.—Christ, in his two natures, and all his mediatorial offices, with all his merits, righteousness and atonement is engaged in their behalf. All the attributes of God: all the promises of the eternal Court of Heaven; all the wise, unsearchable providences of God, and all the operations of the Holy Spirit, are engaged for their complete salvation and glorification.

2d. They are advanced to the highest possible dignity. They are sons of God; and as they are sons, they are heirs, "*heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.*" What is their inheritance? All things; "*all things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*"

3d. They are safe; for they are in the glorious hiding place. The second Adam can never fall. As the head stands eternally, the members can never be separated from his body. Satan can never drag his spouse from his arms. The truth of God is pledged for their salvation: "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and no one is able to pluck them out of my hands.*" Christ has prayed for their complete, eternal glorification: "*Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.*" And he tells us, that his Father always hears him when he prays; and if the Father heard that prayer, then he may say with the apostle, "*I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.*" They that are led by the Spirit, can rejoice in tribulation. They taste a sweetness in affliction, of which the world is ignorant. Faith in Christ can pull down the branches of the tree of life into the bitter waters of Marah, and turn them into the sweetness of heaven; and, like Sampson, it can suck honey out of the carcase of the lion. When faith views Christ on his mediatorial throne, and all things in heaven and earth committed to him, its language always is. "*Lord, thy will be done.*" It changes a dungeon into a palace, and a bed of affliction into a Paradise. It views the sorest trials as the purchase of Christ, and the very means by which eternal and unerring wisdom prepares the soul for that blessed country, the inhabitants of which no more say, "*I am sick,*" for there is neither death, nor sorrow, nor crying there.

Death is sweet, and even delightful, to those who walk after the Spirit; for Christ, by dying, conquered death; he deprived it of its sting and curse, and he sweetened the grave for all his followers.

S E R M O N X .

NO ROOM FOR CHRIST IN THE HEARTS OF SINNERS.

Because there was no room for them in the Inn.—LUKE ii. 7.

THE Son of God came to our world upon a message of mercy; to seek and to save them that were lost; to redeem sinners from under the heavy yoke of the devil, and reconcile them to their offended Lord. But, although his mission was so kind and benevolent, yet was the treatment he received, upon his appearance in the flesh, extremely shameful and degrading. His reception was indeed humiliating. Although he was the eternal Son of God, the first night he tarried in our world, there was no room for him in the Inn. He had no better accommodations than a stable for his shelter, and a manger for his bed. And at the present day, his reception is similar. There is no room for Christ in the Inn. There is room for profane oaths, imprecations and hellish blasphemies; there is room for balls, rioting and dancing; for cards and dice; for drunkenness and every species of dissipation: but none for Christ. His name and religion are rarely mentioned, but to be blasphemed or ridiculed.

An Inn is a place of accommodation for strangers and travellers; and, in a certain sense, every man's house may be called an Inn. For there every worthy and respectable character, every beloved friend, meets with a kind reception and hospitable treatment. Again, the heart may be said to be a house of entertainment, in a certain sense. It is in the heart and affections particularly, that your friend is entertained; for, give him evidence that he no longer possesses your confidence, and all the dainties of the table become insipid. For your table and lodging room are only signs of your friendship; and, according to this view of the subject, it may be said of all the inhabitants of this world, there is no room for Christ in the Inn.

In discoursing upon this subject, we shall

I. Describe this heavenly stranger, for whom there is no room in the Inn.

II. Speak of those horrid guests that occupy the houses and hearts of the children of men.

III. Say something of the consequences of rejecting Christ and shutting him out of the heart.

I. Describe this heavenly stranger.

He is the most illustrious, glorious and dignified personage that ever heaven or earth beheld. The Son of God—the brightness of his Father's glory—and the express image of his person—possessed of all the attributes and perfections of the Godhead. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, who sways the sceptre of the universe, and administers justice throughout heaven, earth and hell.

He is the woman's promised seed that bruised the serpent's head, made of the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, yet Abraham's God, existing eternally before he had a being—the root and offspring of David—his son, and yet his Creator and Lord. He is the Son born, and the child given, prophesied of by Isaiah, whose name should be called "*Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.*" It is he whom Isaiah saw sitting on his throne, high and lifted up, his train filling the temple, and the winged cherubims celebrating his praise, crying one to another, "*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.*" He is the essential wisdom of God. He beholds all things from everlasting to everlasting, from the heights of heaven to the lowest depths of hell, at one view. He planned the order of the universe, and formed the established laws of nature, by which night and day, heat and cold, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, observe his fixed commands. By his direction the planets move in perfect harmony, and all the systems of worlds preserve the utmost order. It is he whom Jehovah terms his "*ELECT, whom he hath chosen, his well beloved Son, in whom his soul delighteth.*" It is he who was chosen in the Eternal Councils of the Godhead to accomplish the redemption of poor, lost sinners of Adam's race.

He is the most amiable, excellent, and respectable character that God, angels or men, ever saw. View him in his divine nature as God, and he is JEHOVAH, the infinite, eternal, unchangeable and independent sovereign of the universe—the uncreated I AM; being itself pure, undervived existence. View him as man, in his human nature, he is spotless and innocent, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. View him as Immanuel, God with us, and how glorious is his beauty! how excellent his perfections! He is fairer than the sons of men, the chiefest of

ten thousand, and altogether lovely. In him meet and harmonize all the attributes of the Godhead. Mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other. Strict justice and unparalleled love unite in him, and agree with each other in the pardon, salvation and eternal blessedness of repenting sinners. One view of his lovely face, communicates to the soul of the penitent a heaven upon earth, joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, a blissful satisfaction far superior to all that crowns and thrones, wealth and treasures can bestow. This, my friends, is the heavenly stranger who left the highest glories, and came down into our base and ungrateful world, upon the most benevolent of missions, and who now courts and pleads for a lodging in the hearts of poor, lost sinners. But to describe fully this dignified character, is a task beyond the power of mortal tongue!

Join all the names of love and pow'r
 That ever men or angels bore;
 All are too mean to speak his worth,
 Or set Immanuel's glory forth."

But why did this glorious personage appear in our world?—What was his design? The prophet Isaiah tells us, he came "*to preach glad tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*" He came "*to seek and save that which was lost.*" And, says the apostle Paul, "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,*" even the chief of sinners.

He came to destroy the works of the devil. He came to save his people from sin and all its dreadful consequences. He took upon him our nature, to deliver them who have been all their life time subject to bondage, from death. He came to save sinners from hell, and raise them to glory and everlasting blessedness.

And now let me ask the question which Pilate once proposed to his bloody persecutors: "*What evil hath he done,*" that you should treat him with such contempt and inattention; that you should reject and despise him, and exclude him from your houses, your families and hearts?

II. Speak of the guests that occupy the houses and hearts of the children of men.

From the loveliness and beauty of the character of Jesus Christ, it might be supposed that all men would be anxious to entertain him in their families, and give him the highest place in their affections. But it is not so. In the courts of kings and palaces of the great, there is no room for Christ. But few of the middle classes can afford room for Christ. An excessive thirst for riches, worldly cares, trades and speculations, vice and wickedness, fill their whole hearts.

And in very few of the little cabins and cottages of the door is Christ entertained. Shameful ignorance and horrid inattention to God and religion, ten thousand low vices have taken complete possession of their souls.

In the hearts of the old there is no room for Christ. Excessive worldly cares, strong prejudices against Christ, and experimental, heartfelt religion, deep rooted habits of vice, fill every corner of their hearts. Nor is Christ much more likely to find a place in the hearts of the middle aged; for they, too, are engrossed with the cares of this world—plans and projects for gaining wealth, anxiety of mind about their property, and such things.

Young sinners have no room in their hearts for Christ and his salvation. They are full of vanity and foolishness—sporting, laughing, giddy conversation, merry meetings, frolics and dancing.

And all classes of men seem to have agreed to entertain any and every thing which will keep them from God and holiness.

1st. The fashions and customs of the world are guests which must be attended to. These occupy the whole time and attention of multitudes; and, in attending to these, they are kept so busy, that they have no time or disposition to attend to the preaching of the word. The world is in all their thoughts by day and night. All their conversation is of corn and tobacco, of land and stock. The price of merchandise and negroes are inexhaustible themes of conversation. But for them the name of Jesus has no charms; and it is rarely mentioned, unless to be profaned. Introduce a conversation of heaven and divine things, speak of the glories of Immanuel, the beauty of the divine attributes, the spirituality of God's word, the sufferings of Jesus, and the sweetness of the pardoning love of God—and they are dumb. Conversations upon these subjects are uninteresting—they are intolerable. And it is evident that they have no room for Christ in their hearts; but only speak of the world, of its fashions and customs—the subject is grasped with eagerness, the tongue is loosed to speak volumes upon a trifle. And, my friends, does not mankind, in the general, live and act as if they neither wished nor desired any other portion; as if they did not believe one syllable of the Bible; as if there was no hell to shun, no heaven to obtain. What an awful demonstration of the truth that there are but few saved.

2d. Pride and selfishness are two favorite guests, and operate to the exclusion of Christ from the heart. Sinners often think it too humbling and too degrading to become the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. To own Christ publicly before the world, many would esteem it an indelible disgrace. To forfeit their respectability for contumely and reproach, to be consider-

ed men of weak minds, to be separated from the fashionable vices of the world, appear too mean and contemptible. Christ cannot be admitted upon such terms. To be popular, they must conform to all the fashions and polite amusements of this world. They must act as if they had never had a serious thought of death, judgment, or eternity; of God, Christ, or his holy religion.

3d. There is an army of vain thoughts lodged in the heart of every unregenerate sinner. With such guests as these, Christ cannot be accommodated.

The human mind possesses active powers and principles, and is constantly employed thinking of, and contemplating the objects that are most pleasing and desirable. Therefore, says our Lord, "*where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.*" Therefore, as the sinner's mind is blind and ignorant of spiritual things, his thoughts must be such as the God of truth declares them to be: "*Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart are only evil, and that continually.*" The minds of some are taken up by politics; and others think so much of their farms, their stock or merchandise, that they have no room for Christ. Again, some are wholly employed in reflections upon trifling, obscene, and filthy subjects; upon vanity, folly and nonsense. And these guests are esteemed more worthy than the Redeemer of Mankind!

4th. A large number of flesh pleasing idols are worshipped by many sinners, to the exclusion of Christ. Do you ask, What is an idol? I answer: Any thing, be it what it may, that we love more than we love our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the world, money and property, are often idols; fine clothing and beautiful ornaments, because they are more highly esteemed than God.—A husband or wife is an idol, if you choose rather to go with such an one to hell than to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus. Filthy appetites and propensities, beloved sins that are as hard to part with as a right eye or a right hand; the BOTTLE, or a fondness for strong drink is an idol, which excludes Christ from the hearts of thousands and millions. The BOTTLE may, with propriety, be termed the drunkard's Christ. For, as the true Christian forsakes all for Christ, so the drunkard leaves all things for the BOTTLE. He parts with his reputation, his money, his property, with the welfare and respectability of his offspring, for his BOTTLE; he parts with the peace and happiness of his family; he parts with reason and with health for the BOTTLE. He parts with his soul, with his God, with Christ and eternal blessedness, for his BOTTLE.

5th. A great many little, innocent *no-harm* sins, as they are called, fill the heart, and bar Christ out of it. But to mention all these *little, beloved, darling, soul-damning* sins, would be impossible. Let *some* few of them suffice. Now, whatever

sin is indulged, is thought, by him who indulges it, to be no harm.

The *gentleman* drunkard takes a hearty drink at the tavern, and sees nothing improper in doing so, because he does not lie like a beast in the streets.

The *swinish* drunkard is beastly drunk on an occasion, but he sees no harm in such conduct. He injures no man.

The man who cheats his neighbor, justifies himself by saying, he would have cheated me if in his power; and it is every man for himself now-a-days. And so the general sentiment of the world goes. Sabbath breaking, cursing, balls, parties, horse-racing, gambling, are all no harm; and it is now obvious that thousands of hearts are barred, by such sins, against Jesus Christ.

6th. A sixth class of those horrid guests which fill the heart, are such as anger, malice and revenge, a bitter, rancorous, unforgiving temper.

Says the sinner, I cursed and swore profanely; but it was no wonder; I was insulted and provoked beyond measure. I was so ill treated, that I got into a tremendous rage; but it was no wonder; I took full satisfaction; I wont be run over; the best man would have done just as I did; I can forgive no such man; I will not be reconciled to him; I have been so badly treated, that I cannot get over it.

7th. There is an host of vain, trifling amusements, such as balls, parties, merry meetings, vain songs, frothy, unprofitable discourse, Sunday visits and diversions. Such as these fill the whole soul, and leave no room for holy things, for Godly conversations, or for Jesus Christ.

With such guests as we have here spoken of, and a thousand others, which cannot now be enumerated, all mankind are filled by nature. With such sins, such propensities and dispositions as these, the hearts and houses of much the greater part of the present generation are filled; and, consequently, there is no room for Christ. He is rejected and despised, as though he were beneath the notice and attention of the world.

But, as the human heart is filled as a crowded inn or tavern, wherein there is no place for Christ, so also it is strongly barred to prevent his admittance.

We will mention some of the bolts which are employed to keep out the Saviour.

1st. Spiritual blindness, gross darkness and ignorance of God, Christ and all heavenly things. Says Paul, "*If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*"

2d. Unbelief is an entire disbelief, a stupid inattention to the promises and threatenings of God; and all the important realities exhibited in his word.

3d. Hardness of heart, which is the natural consequence of spiritual blindness and unbelief. The sinner, as he is blind to danger, and disbelieves all God's word, his heart is thought proof against all the terrors of Jehovah, and the alluring invitations of the gospel.

4th. Strong prejudices against the Lord's way of saving sinners. Regeneration, conversion, heartfelt religion, feeling the love of God shed abroad in the heart, are doctrines which cannot be endured; to receive these things is called delusion, enthusiasm, or the effects of a weak mind. The world chooses rather to live in sin, and go to hell, than to be saved in such a way.

5th. Old habits of sin, deep-rooted propensities, are strong barriers against Christ and the exertions of his word and Spirit. Nothing but the power of an Almighty God can remove them; and hence it is a miracle, indeed, for an old sinner to be converted. "*Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.*"

6th. Self-righteousness. This closes and bars the heart of every sinner against Christ; and, what is wonderful indeed, not only the strict, sober formalist, and the upright moralist, deceive themselves and go to hell, trusting to their own righteousness, but even the most swinish drunkard, the most heaven daring blasphemer, expects to be saved in the same way. Their good hearts, their benevolent actions, and some amiable conduct, will overbalance all their wickedness, and purchase heaven at last.

III. Say something of the consequences of rejecting Christ, and shutting him out of the heart.

Christ is frequently represented in Scripture as calling to sinners, stretching out his hands and weeping over them, coming as a suppliant to their doors, praying, pleading and beseeching them, reasoning and expostulating with them. He is represented as being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, complaining of their ingratitude, unwilling to give them up to destruction. He is represented as pleading with his Father to spare them; as holding back the sword of divine justice, praying that God would try them one year longer. He is represented as knocking at their hearts for admittance: "*Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and will open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.*"

Christ stands at the door and knocks—which may teach us, that, unless the door is soon opened, he will withdraw. When a person of respectability taps at a door, and taps frequently,

and it is not opened, he will possibly be affronted and go away displeased; he will conceive himself insulted, and will never return.

And such will be the consequence, sinners, if, after Christ has frequently called and invited you by his providences, his Spirit, conscience, and the preaching of the word, you resist and refuse him admittance into your hearts. He will depart, to return no more. Then will be accomplished upon you that awful declaration of the God of Truth: "*My Spirit shall not always strive with man*"—"Let him alone"—"*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.*" Then the sinner is just as sure of damnation, as if he were in hell.—Afterwards he may live many years in peace and plenty, may sit under the most powerful awakening preaching of the gospel; but all the effect it will have, will be to harden his heart, and sear his conscience, and ripen him for a more aggravated damnation.

The same fire that melts and dissolves wax, will dry and harden clay. The rain and sun, which enlivens all nature, causes a green tree to grow and flourish, will consume and waste away a dead tree. The same gospel that is the wisdom of God and the power of God to the salvation of all them that believe, which prepares the people of God as vessels of mercy for immortal glory and blessedness in the heavenly state, will prove a Saviour of death unto death to the finally impenitent, and be the means of hardening them and fitting them for hell. Another consequence of rejecting the calls and entreaties of Christ, and thrusting him from the heart, while the devil, the world, and sin, are cherished in full possession, is, that the heart will be hardened. The sinner wears out his day of grace; the things that belong to his peace are forever hidden from his eyes; and, with rapacity, he fills up the measure of his iniquity, and fits himself a vessel of wrath for destruction. The sure and final consequence of thus dealing with Christ, neglecting his calls and shutting the heart against him, will be certain ruin and hopeless misery. Sinners, in this world, are sometimes visited by tremendous judgments, which are only the beginning of sorrows—only a pre-libation of fiercer pains and keener torments which they shall endure in hell.

We might here introduce the instance of the antedeluvians, who slighted and treated with contempt the warnings of Noah, until their day of grace was past, and the flood came and destroyed them; and the example of the Sodomites, who treated with scorn, Lot's admonitions, until, in a moment when they imagined all was safe, the storm of fire and brimstone came upon them and consumed them. We might tell you of the fearful end of Pharaoh, of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, of Herod and

Antiochus Epiphanes, and other impenitent sinners, that were made dreadful monuments of divine wrath in this world. But we will pass to the unbelieving Jews, who rejected the promised Messiah—shut their eyes against the light—refused offered mercy—to whom prophet after prophet was sent to call them to repentance, and warn them to flee the wrath to come. But these were stoned and put to death. And last, God sent them his Son. He spake as never man spake; he performed works such as man never performed; he warned and entreated them; he wept over them; and, as a hen spreads her wings over her brood to preserve them from the bird of prey, he stretched out his love and compassion to preserve them from danger. But, Oh lamentable! they refused his protection, and put him to death, crying, "*His blood be on us and on our children.*" And what were the consequences? Woe, wretchedness, and desolation, came upon them; and their nation was destroyed, and the few individuals who were left, were scattered to the four winds of heaven, and are, to this day, despised of all men. But all the woes and misery which came upon them, were not to be compared to the horrid torments which they were doomed to experience in the flames of hell. And, sinners, the keenest anguish that can be felt in this life bears no comparison to that unutterable torment which awaits you beneath the weight of God's wrath in hell.

S E R M O N X I .

ON THE BLINDING POLICIES OF SATAN.

But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.—2 Cor. iv. 3 and 4.

THE Gospel is defined, glad tidings, or a bundle of good news. Indeed, it is the sweetest sound that ever reached the ears of sinners of Adam's race; for it conveys to them the blessed tidings of a door of mercy being opened for poor, guilty, condemned criminals—of pardon and reconciliation to God, and of a full and eternal salvation through the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, alas! sinners treat it as the Jews did its divine author: "*He came to his own, but his own received him not.*" And they hear the Gospel as the antedeluvians heard the preaching of Noah: "*The light shines in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not; Christ crucified is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.*" And the cause of all this we have in the text: "*Our Gospel is hid to them that are lost.*" But how is the "*Gospel hid from them that are lost?*" We are informed that "*The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not.*" The devil, in Scripture, is styled, "*The prince of the power of the air; the spirit that works in the children of disobedience.*" These expressions have an allusion to his dwelling or reigning in the hearts of sinners, and to his leading them from one degree of sin to another, until they are ripe for hell, and to their yielding themselves his willing slaves, and being well pleased with his cruel government.—He is termed "*a strong man armed,*" because he keeps the throne in the sinner's heart, and fortifies it against the attacks of the Word and Spirit of God. He is termed "*the God of this world,*" because he is the God of sinners; for they

bear his image; they possess his nature and disposition; they do his will and promote his interests in the world. In order to maintain his tyrannical dominion over them, he blinds their minds, hardens their hearts, sears their consciences, and shuts the avenues of their souls against the light of God's Word and Spirit; and his design in thus blinding them, we are informed, in the words of the text, is, "*lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*" As long as he can keep the sinner blind to his danger, and to the excellencies of Jesus Christ, so long may he rule him and keep him his willing captive; and thus the "*Gospel is hid to them that are lost.*"

In the prosecution of the subject, I will

- I. Point out the persons from whom the Gospel is hid.
- II. Speak of the methods by which Satan blinds the minds of sinners.

I. Point out the persons from whom the Gospel is hid; and,

1st. The Gospel is hid to all deists or infidels, who reject it as a fable, and who treat Jesus Christ as an impostor. These persons wilfully shut the door of mercy against themselves, and make their own damnation sure. "*Light is come into the world, but they choose darkness rather than light;*" they condemn the Bible, but they have never seriously investigated the subject, and weighed the evidences and arguments on both sides of the question; they will not come to the light, for they fear conviction, and wish to be deceived. If they can persuade themselves that religion is a delusion, and that God is a filthy, depraved being like themselves, who will connive at sin, then they can run into every excess without dreading the consequences.

2d. The unthinking, who take no interest in religion, and cannot tell whether the Bible is true or false; for they have never read it—perhaps they never possessed it—they cannot tell whether there be a hell: on this matter they have never reflected. They are ignorant of the use of prayer; therefore, they never attend to it. They spend the Sabbath in visiting and various frivolous amusements; but they think there is no harm in all this; for they have never seriously reflected on the impropriety of their conduct. They indulge in all manner of sinful pleasures, and yet they think themselves innocent, harmless creatures, who injure none but themselves. To all such, the Gospel is hid; their eyes are blinded by the God of this world, and they wilfully make their own damnation sure.

3d. All who slight the means of grace. These persons never attend the public preaching of God's word; or, if they are occasionally present, they do not listen to a solitary sentence during the sermon; or they seat themselves out of doors, and are employed in laughing, jesting, or conversing on trifling sub-

jects; when they profess to be worshipping God, their thoughts, like the fool's eye, wander to the end of the earth, and their minds are employed about their speculations, or some other temporal business. When they return home, they cannot tell a sentence that was uttered by the preacher; but with great exactness they can describe the color and fashion of every dress, coat and bonnet in the congregation. To all such persons the Gospel is hid.

4th. All who live in the love and practice of sin; all drunkards, swearers, debauchees, liars and openly profane sinners; to all such the Gospel is hid; they boldly and openly work out their own damnation; they glory in their shame; the language of their conduct is, I make no pretensions to religion—the world sees me, sinner as I am; I wish it to be known that I am of my father, the devil, and that his works I will do; that I acknowledge no allegiance to the Sovereign of the universe; that I never bow my knee to the God that made me, and that I do not feel myself bound to obey any of his commands.

5th. All prayerless persons, who never pray in secret nor in their families, have a convincing proof, in their own breasts, that to them the Gospel is hid, and that the God of this world has blinded their minds. Although they are under the curse of the law, and hang over the gulf of hell by the brittle thread of life; although God is angry with them every day, and they know not how soon death, like a thief in the night, will surprise them, and plunge them into the flames of the pit; yet, they are blind to their danger; careless and prayerless, they press on, indulging their sinful propensities, despising religion, and mocking at things eternal, till, in an unexpected moment, they are seized by the grim monster, placed beyond the reach of mercy, and confined in the prison of hell.

6th. All stiflers of conviction, who resist the operations of the Spirit, and wear off the impressions he has made on their minds; to them the Gospel is hid. And, alas! how many of this description are to be found in this enlightened land! Sinners, when seated under the preaching of the word, has not your condition been frequently so plainly pointed out, that conscience whispered, in the words of Nathan to David, "*Thou art the man?*" You have often been convinced, that, without repentance, hell must be your portion; but you no sooner left the house of God than you betook yourselves to your ungodly companions—laughed away your convictions, and returned to your sin and folly; or, perhaps, you have been for a time deeply convicted; you then abandoned your sinful practices—you prayed in secret, and made many solemn vows to God that you would never again return to sin; but the world and its pleasures gradually overcame your resolutions, and your last state is worse than

the first: "*When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and, finding none, he saith, I will return to my house whence I came out; and when he cometh, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh to him seven spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.*"

Our congregations abound with those who were once deeply convicted, who forsook the pleasures of the world, and who "*heard the word with joy, and received it gladly,*" and professed to feel great pleasure in drawing near to God in secret and family prayer, who regularly attended the preaching of the gospel, who often sat down at a communion table, and who have frequently exhorted their friends and relations to flee the wrath to come; but how is it with them now, the Gospel is hid to them? They are blinded by the God of this world: "*It has happened unto them according to the true proverb: the dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow, that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.*" And now they live as careless and prayerless as those who never seriously thought of God and religion; they rarely attend the preaching of the Gospel; their consciences are "*seared as with an hot iron;*" and of all descriptions of sinners, their condition is the most hopeless.

7th. All worldly minded persons; whose highest object is the wealth or pleasure of this world; their great employment is to amass wealth and enjoy sinful pleasure; but they are not at all concerned about the salvation of their souls. They can sit from Sabbath to Sabbath, under the most awful and alarming sermons, and be as unfeeling as the seats on which they sit; instead of listening to the Word of God, you may see them gazing over the assembly, or repeatedly trudging out and into the house, to the great annoyance of the congregation. To all such, "*the Gospel is hid, for the God of this world hath blinded their minds, lest the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*"

II. Speak of the methods by which Satan blinds the minds of sinners. When we consider unconverted sinners as being blind to the danger to which they are exposed, and incapable of viewing the beauty and excellency of Christ and his salvation, and when we are informed that "*the God of this world has thus blinded their minds,*" the expression must refer to the methods by which he excludes spiritual light from them.

1st. He persuades sinners to live prayerless, and make no exertions for salvation. When a sinner hears an awakening sermon, or when he is privately warned by the ministers or people of God to flee the wrath to come, then Satan says, sit still; if you are a sinner, you do not feel yourself such; if you

are in danger, you do not see it; it would be very absurd in you to cry for mercy when you are blind to your danger; it would be very foolish for you to pray when you do not feel the burden of guilt; and for you to be striving for salvation, when you are not convinced of sin, would be to mock God; sit still, and wait God's time; strive to get rich, drink, swear, and profane the Sabbath; attend all places of merriment; absent yourself from the ministrations of all alarming, awakening preachers, and never think of religion, death, heaven or hell; until God gives you a call you cannot withstand; and then it will be time for you to seek your soul's salvation.

2d. In order to blind the sinner's heart against the light of God's Word and Spirit, Satan fills his mind with prejudice against experimental religion. O, says that old serpent, the devil, conversion and a sensible experience of the love of God shed abroad in the heart, communion with God, and Christ in the soul, the hope of glory, are only wild delusions, peculiar to weak minds; such a religion will sink you into contempt; the gay and respectable members of society will esteem you a fanatic; pay no attention to these whining, bawling, conversion preachers, who, instead of pleasing and improving your taste with geography, philosophy, and astronomy, are forever talking about a crucified Christ, and the pardoning love of God, and are constantly terrifying you with the curses of the law and the terrors of the second death. Instead of following such, take for your guides those wise persons who have found out and written about a better way of religion than that pointed out by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God. These men profess Christianity, and they are its warm and able advocates; but they despise conversion and experimental religion; true, they are not very strict in their lives, but they can show you a pleasant way to heaven, without any thing experimental or self-denying, and which will not expose you to contempt for Christ's sake.

3d. To blind the minds of sinners, Satan persuades them to put off the work of their soul's salvation until a more convenient season; hence it is very difficult to persuade young sinners to pray, repent, and seek an interest in Christ; for, when they have thoughts of turning to God, Satan says, you are too young, gay, and beautiful, to engage in such a gloomy thing as religion—it better suits gray heads and wrinkled faces; they have lost all taste for the pleasures of this world; moreover, if you repent and seek the Lord, you must part with all your innocent amusements, balls, and such like; and you know this will be intolerable as death; moreover, your young companions will despise and deride you; indeed, you will be objects of ridicule to all who are acquainted with you; were all the young people of the country to become religious, then you might try to obtain it;

but your seeking religion now, will only render you ridiculous and objects of contempt. Therefore, they resolve that, until middle age, they will risk eternal damnation; but that, at that period they will be associating with a more solid class of men, and then they will change their manner of life; but when middle age arrives, the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches extinguish every serious thought and useful impression. Their great aim now is, to have a good farm, an elegant house, and an independent fortune. To accomplish all this, ten thousand projects and speculations occupy their thoughts and affections, and they have no time to attend to their soul's salvation; therefore, they put off repentance and conversion until old age. At last, old age arrives; but, alas! their hearts are so hard, and their consciences so seared, that they find it impossible to attend to the work of repentance and faith; perhaps their damnation is sealed, and their hearts, like that of Pharaoh, judicially hardened. Indeed, you will generally find that the gray-headed sinner is an infidel, a profane swearer, a confirmed drunkard, or a malignant scoffer at religion; and his case is nearly as hopeless as if he were already in hell.

4th. To blind the hearts of sinners and ensure their damnation, Satan strives to make them ashamed of serious thoughts about religion, death, and a future state; hence nothing mortifies them more than to think that others know they entertain serious thoughts about seeking the salvation of their souls, and were they found on their knees before God, they would be as much ashamed of it as if they had been engaged in some base, scandalous act. When under the preaching of the Word, their hearts are pierced with conviction, and their minds are filled with distress, from a sense of their exposure to hell, they quake with fear, lest their unconverted companions should discover their feeling; hence they assume the appearance of heroic boldness; they try to look around upon the congregation, and force themselves to appear careless and inattentive. When the arrow of conviction pierces their hearts, for a moment they appear gloomy and sad; but the next moment a forced smile plays upon their lips. If they are compelled to shed tears, they quickly wipe them away, and are as much ashamed to be seen in this situation, by their unconverted companions, as to be found stealing; hence the sinner will lie rather than discover the real feelings of his heart; he will say, I don't know what ailed me, but I had no serious thoughts about the salvation of my soul, nor of death, judgment, nor eternity; and, in order to avoid disgrace, he will turn religion into ridicule, and laugh vehemently at conviction, conversion, and damnation. Surely the sinner has often hard work to get to hell. But when the arrow of conviction sticks fast in his conscience, and he is brought to seri-

ous consideration. O, says the devil, shake it off, drink, laugh, or dance it away; you must not pray in secret, or your companions will detect you. If you attempt to seek religion, a thousand to one, but you will fall back into sin, and then your case will be much worse than before; therefore, you had better abandon all thoughts of it, live in the enjoyment of the pleasures of the world, and risk the future state.

But, perhaps conviction has sunk so deep into the sinner's heart, that he is afraid to turn back, and, like Agrippa, he is almost persuaded to become a Christian: says Satan, stop and count the cost. If you set out to seek religion, you will disgrace yourself; you know you are apt to drink a glass of liquor too much occasionally; perhaps your disposition will lead you into a passion; perhaps when you are insulted, you may slip out an oath, or engage in a fight; perhaps you may be persuaded to go to a ball and dance, or perhaps you may become lively in jovial company; then every one will think of your religion, and laugh and sneer and hiss at the hypocrite; and then you will be destitute of all associates, for Christians will despise you because you have no religion, and the wicked will treat you as an impostor; therefore, banish from your mind all thoughts of religion, and live in the enjoyment of sin.

5th. When the sinner's mind is distressed about his condition, and he is about to start for eternal life, Satan will strive to prejudice him against some things attending the operations of the Holy Spirit. Says the tempter, if you could slip into religion, and no person know it until you made a profession, this would be quite decent; but, before you can obtain it, you must be a spectacle to all around you, and how unmanly and weak minded will you appear, to be weeping and bowing your head like a willow, under every sermon you hear; your gloomy, monkish, and melancholy aspect, will render you ridiculous; but should you be seized with bodily agitation, should you be constrained to fall to the earth like Paul and the jailor, should you be brought to cry for mercy in the public congregation, like many under the preaching of the apostles, or should you be seized with the jerks, as many are in the present day, could you support yourself under such disgrace? Would it not be much better to live in sin, even if you should be damned at last, than to obtain religion on such humiliating terms?

But if, notwithstanding all the efforts of Satan, the sinner will cry to God for mercy, his next stratagem is, to send the fowls of hell to gather up the good seed the Spirit of God has sown in his heart, and now his wicked companions approach him with all the craft and subtlety of their father, the devil; for the purpose of alluring him into sin, they persuade him to visit the tavern, or put the inebriating bowl to his mouth, or visit the race-

ground, or ball-room; and it too often happens that the awakened sinner yields to temptation, grieves the Spirit of God, and sinks into perdition.

But if this stratagem fails, he tries more violent measures; he stirs up his wicked companions to torment, reproach, and persecute him, and to do their utmost to laugh him out of his soul's salvation; sometimes the devil stirs up the rage of his ungodly relatives, if possible to force him to flee the wrath to come; and thus unconverted parents, wives, and husbands, become instrumental in the damnation of their own relations.

If these efforts fail, and the devil cannot thereby draw the sinner into his former wicked practices, and hardness of heart, he tries him upon new ground, viz: to deceive him, and influence him to settle down on a false hope, and rest short of Christ; and, by this means, thousands fall back to sin, and lose their souls. Some go no farther than an external reformation; on this they depend: some mistake certain enlargements and meltings of the passions, for religion; while others embrace some phantom or chimera furnished to their imagination by the devil; (thus, for instance, they imagine that they see Christ smiling upon them, or hanging upon the cross;) this they embrace for religion, and thereby lose their souls. But, lastly, the devil blinds the minds of sinners, by filling them with prejudice against the ministers of the Gospel; and, when this is accomplished, did the minister speak with the zeal of Paul, or the eloquence of Apollo's, all his labors would prove in vain; sinners would sleep on in carnal security, unmoved by his most alarming discourses. But what is still more fatal, is, for the minds of the people of God to be filled with this prejudice; perhaps because he is not of their party, or because they think he holds certain doctrines contrary to their creed, or on some other account, he is not the object of their esteem; therefore they seldom carry his case to God by prayer; they are not interested in the success of his ministry. In a word, they would be as well satisfied to see all the sinners of the congregation forever damned, as that they should be converted, by his ministry.

APPLICATION.

Have I not a witness in the breasts of my hearers, that this doctrine is true? Have I not preached the experience of many who hear me, and does not conscience tell you that your minds are blinded by the God of this world?

I have preached nearly two years in this place, and I know not that my ministry has been to the smallest purpose. I have reason to conclude, that no soul has been converted by my instrumentality. I can appeal to God that I have desired your salvation as I have desired my own; I have endeavored to find out the most profitable subjects, and to improve them in such a

way as would have the most probable tendency to touch the heart and awaken the conscience—but all in vain. I have longed, and hoped against hope, until all hope seems to be gone, and still there is not one soul awakened. The awful conclusion comes out at last: “*If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*”

SERMON XI.

THE DANGER OF REJECTING THE MEANS OF SALVATION.

He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.—PROVERBS XXIX. 1.

THE book of the Proverbs of Solomon is a rich cabinet of jewels, an invaluable collection of the most precious divine truths. Every sentence contains a system of wisdom, and every proverb holds out the most forcible instructions, accommodated to matters both of temporal and eternal concern. Here we may find infallible rules to direct us in all the business and common affairs of life; and those instructions, at the same time, are as forcible, as weighty, and as important in the duties and exercises of religion. Every proverb is short and concise, contained in a very few words, and therefore more easily retained in the memory; and, for the most part, they are expressed in metaphorical language, and therefore the more pleasing and entertaining to the mind.

But of all these sayings of the wisest of men, there is none more weighty or worthy of our attention, than the proverb contained in our text: “*He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.*”

This proverb may be fitly spoken concerning all situations; in whatever course a man blunders on, headstrong and regardless of advice or admonition, whether it be in domestic affairs, in trade, in politics, in war, or in any thing else which he pursues by wrong measures with incorrigible obstinacy. And Solomon, no doubt, designed it to be thus applied in a remote sense, since he was a good economist, a wise politician, and a man well skilled in all the affairs of life.

But certainly in a more direct sense, he designed its application for matters of religion; and, indeed, it holds good in things of spiritual and eternal concern, that “*He that, being often re-*

proved, and hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy."

In this sense of the text, we shall prosecute the subject; and, for its further illustration, we shall

I. Consider some of the reproofs by which God would reclaim sinners;

II. Some of the means by which sinners harden their necks against his reproofs;

III. The dreadful, but inevitable doom of the impenitent: they "*shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy."*"

And here a few prefatory remarks; and we would

1st. Observe, that, to reprove, is just to charge a person with his faults to his face, in such a plain and pointed manner, as to make him ashamed of the baseness and impropriety of his conduct.

2d. Every reproof tends either directly or indirectly to the reformation of the person reproved, unless he is wilfully obstinate and incorrigible.

3d. These reproofs, which come from the word of God, the Spirit of God, and the dictates of conscience, are designed for the sinner's good, to reclaim him from sin and wrath, and would have this effect, if carefully and diligently attended to. But to proceed:

How many reproofs are directed to sinners by God, through the means of a pious education. You that have been raised by Christian parents, how often have your fathers and mothers told you, with weeping eyes and heart breaking sorrow, that you were going to hell. How often have they plead with you, in tenderest concern for your souls, to turn from your sinful practices; to pray and cry for mercy; to seek salvation, and obtain an interest in Christ, while the door of mercy was open! How often have they honestly told you that hell would be your portion, unless you repented of your sins and turned to God? But do all parents make it their business to administer reproofs like these? Alas, no! and yet their children must be converted, must experience the joys of pardoned sin, or else be damned. You have not told them of your own experience, of God's work upon your own hearts. You have never pressed them to quit every sin and make sure of an interest in Christ. No. If you could learn them to work, to make bargains, and gather riches, you thought you were doing very well. If you learned them to read and get the shorter catechism, you thought that was religion enough. Yea, have not the ungodly lives and conduct of many professing parents been a stumbling block, and the means of hardening their children, and ripening them for hell? Your neglect of secret prayer, of family devotions—your trifling, ungodly conduct, have hardened your families in sin.—

And have you not often told them, or at least said in their hearing, "There is no need for such an ado about religion; the ministers carry matters too far; people might be good enough and go to heaven, without all this noise about conversion and the new birth."

2d. Have you not been often reproved by some friend, relation, or acquaintance? Impressed with an earnest desire for your welfare, have they not informed you that your state was miserable and wretched, and exhorted you to repent and turn to God?

3d. Were you not reproved, time after time, during the revival a few years ago, when the Lord had graciously poured out his Spirit in this backsliding and guilty land? Did not every soul-searching sermon cut you to the heart, and make you tremble, like Felix, under a sense of the dismal horrors of your state? Yea, did they not set you, like Esau, to seek your salvation sorrowfully with tears? Did not the very looks, the appearance and conversation of your friends and neighbors, under bitter awakenings and anxious concern about their souls, reprove your stupidity, pain and torment your souls, every time you saw them at meeting, or met and conversed with them?

4th. Has not conscience pained, tortured, and often reproved you, when lying upon a sick bed, or when some valued friend has been snatched away by death? Then did not conscience alarm you with all the horrors of your situation? It whispered to your inmost soul, that all was wrong with you; that you were unprepared to die. Hell stared you in the face, with all its gloomy torments. Then you prayed and cried for mercy.— You promised God again and again, that if you were spared, you would repent and seek his favor. But, no sooner did your disease abate, or the alarming providence was a little out of sight, than your vows were broken, and your resolutions forgotten.

5th. You have been reproved year after year, Sabbath after Sabbath, by the faithful preaching of God's Word. Your guilty souls have often been probed to the bottom; all the hidden recesses of the heart, the lurking places of hypocrisy and deceit have been laid open to your view. And has not conscience, faithfully applying the Word, cried in your ears, night and day, "*Thou art the man?*" And you have loathed yourself in dust and ashes. But these things were suffered to wear away.

6th. God's Holy Spirit has been your reprobation, convincing you of sin, righteousness, and a judgment to come, showing you your need of Christ and his salvation. Many of you can look back for months and years, to times of awakening, when the Spirit of God brought home conviction to your hearts, with light and power; when you saw yourselves plainly in the road

to ruin, and exposed to the wrath of an angry God, your soul was filled with agony and distress; you prayed and wept; like Herod, you did many things; you reformed your lives; you forsook your old companions; you left your old sins; you groaned in spirit, tormented with fears of hell; some of you gradually wore off your convictions; your consciences obtained ease; and, at last, every serious, solemn thought was banished, and you are now as careless and prayerless as the beasts that perish. With others of you, convictions continued until you met with some sweet, melting frame, some enlargement in prayer, or some such empty vapor or shadow, instead of Christ. And this is your whole conversion. Now you remain dead, carnal formalists.—Perhaps the Spirit of God has reproved you again, and sent home your conviction with redoubled vigor. Again you have sought and found ease; again he has alarmed you, and again you have got ease. Such of you have reason to quake and tremble; for God has said, "*My Spirit shall not always strive with man;*" and in the text, "*He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.*"

II. We will consider some of the means by which sinners harden their necks against God's reproofs: "*He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck.*" A stiff neck is a metaphor often used in Scripture, to signify an unyielding spirit, resolute in disobedience, in spite of all advice and reproof. Therefore, in various passages of Scripture, the rebellious Jews are termed, a "*stiff-necked people.*" This metaphor is taken from a sullen, ungovernable ox, who, in spite of the lash and goad, and all other means which may be used, refuses to bend his neck and submit to the yoke. And this senseless brute very fitly represents the conduct of the stupid and unreasonable sinner, who stiffens his neck and hardens himself in sin, notwithstanding the strongest persuasions and reproofs of God. For a person to harden his neck, is simply to continue obstinate in disobedience, persist in error, and refuse reformation.

But, to mention some of the means by which the sinner hardens his heart, and stiffens his neck against the admonitions, persuasions, and reproofs of God's Word and the Holy Spirit. And,

1st. By a careless indifference and inattention. How many never-dying souls, who now hear me, have sat, from year to year, like hardened rocks, under the faithful preaching of the Word. Though the terrors and thunders of Jehovah have been displayed, and the furnace of hell laid open to your view; though the grace of the Gospel and the beauties of Jesus; though the unspeakable glories and bliss of the heavenly world have been painted in the most striking colors; yet their hearts have remained unmoved and unaffected, as the seats upon which they sat. How often

have they been faithfully reproved from the pulpit, of their danger, and in private too, of the imminent danger of neglecting their soul's salvation. But yet they have paid no regard to these matters, and by such inattention and careless stupidity, they have hardened their necks.

2d. By an aversion and hatred of those means which God has ordained and appointed as the medium through which to communicate spiritual blessings; such as, reading the Bible, praying, self-examination, hearing with attention—which aversion and hatred, prove the total depravity of human nature, and clearly evinces that the unconverted soul hates God with a perfect hatred. Now, I appeal to your consciences, if this has not been a means by which you have hardened your hearts and stiffened your necks against the reproofs of God? Do you not secretly despise to read the Bible, and do you not prefer to read a play-book, a newspaper, a profane history, or any other book, while your Bible lies for months together upon the shelf, without being opened, unless sometimes upon a Sabbath day; then you take it down, you open it and read a few verses; but it is like a hard day's work to get through one chapter. You turn to another place, and if you have any satisfaction at all, it is in some curious narrative in the historical part: something about the warlike exploits of Gideon, Sampson, David, &c., or else in finding some text that condemns some other man's opinion. The Sabbath is an intolerable burden. It is by far the longest day of the week; and you had rather do two days' hard work, than spend this day in reading, praying, and such exercises as God requires. You sleep on Sunday morning until the sun is an hour or two high. You rise and loll about till you take breakfast. You then take down a book and try to read; but the exercise is disagreeable; the time passes very slow; you twist and turn upon your chair twenty ways; you cannot sit easy in any position. In order to spend the tedious hours, you must walk round your corn-field, look at your wheat and oats. Then you return to the house and entertain your family a while with the observations you have made upon your crop. At length dinner comes on—but yet there is nearly one half of the long day to be whiled away; you must lie down and take a little sleep. Perhaps your conscience pains you a little; but the devil provides you with an excuse. You were up late last night, or you did not rest well. Or may be, he persuades you that you are a little unwell. You sleep an hour or two; but the day has not gone yet. You must walk over and see one of your neighbors, who is sick; you cannot spare time from the plough to-morrow. Then you spend the afternoon in talking about the world. You come home, and are abed before the daylight is out of the skies. The next morning, happy day! you are up and about your business by day-

light, or before. As to secret or family prayer, this is the most toilsome drudgery. The thought of praying one hour is intolerable, and you will not do it in despite of all the reproofs of your conscience, God's Word, the Holy Spirit, and the ministers of the Gospel. But if, at any time, you should do it, you are dragged to it, as the slave is dragged to his drudgery, for fear of the lash. You pray with as much reluctance as ever the criminal went to the place of punishment; and when you have prayed, how happy you are that the task is performed.

3d. By an unwillingness to examine the state of their souls, many harden their necks. The formal professor, the deceived hypocrite, and almost Christian, risk their damnation, rather than try the foundation of their hopes, know themselves, and come into close quarters to see the worst of their case. Thus they labor hard to stifle conscience, and murder their convictions.—They strive more anxiously to hold to their false hopes, than ever they did to work out their salvation.

4th. By a willingness to be deceived. The poor, almost Christian, struggles as for life to retain his false hope, notwithstanding all reproof. If he is driven from one carnal refuge, he flies to another; and thus hardens his heart and stiffens his neck, and will not look to Christ until reduced to the last extreme of painful necessity. When every other stratagem fails, he tries the formal round of duties as long as he can. In a word, he will choose any carnal refuge or false resting place, any other possible scheme or invention, rather than bow his neck to Christ's yoke, or submit to God's method of salvation. Let such quake and tremble, and be horribly afraid, for God has spoken it.—They "*shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.*"

III. Consider briefly the inevitable doom of the finally impenitent. They "*shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.*"

All their earthly pleasures and worldly prospects, upon which their hearts are fixed, shall be blasted and eternally cut off. All their delusive hopes of heaven and salvation shall be blasted forever.

They "*shall be destroyed.*" No sooner shall their measure of iniquity be filled to the brim, and their cup of wrath to the overflowing, than the patience of God shall end. His vengeance will sleep no longer. Then shall destruction come upon the impenitent sinner with rapid strides. As saith the Lord, "*Because I have called, and ye have refused; I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.*"

“Shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy;” that is, without any possibility of escape. As the sinner rejects the blood and merits of the Son of God, and refuses to bow his neck to Christ, he rejects the only hope—the only remedy which has been provided to save sinners.

Then there is no more sorrow for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. He that despised Moses's law, died by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much s^oever punishment suppose you that he shall be counted worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and has done despite to the Spirit of all grace. He shall be cast into hell, into the blackness of darkness, into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, but the smoke of his torment shall ascend up forever and ever.

S E R M O N X I I I

ON THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

*For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.—
2 CORINTHIANS v. 10.*

THIS world is a place of probation, in which to prepare for a future state of existence. Such as we are here, such we shall be through the ceaseless ages of eternity. All mankind are swiftly passing to eternity. Some are preparing, by the wise and unerring, though gentle, hand of divine grace, as vessels fit for their "*Father's house.*" These shall be filled with pure, unbounded, and unparalleled glory in the heavenly state. Others are filling themselves as vessels of wrath for destruction, treasuring up for themselves, "*wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*"

These two classes include the whole human family—all those millions which inhabit this earth. Two awful events, death and judgment, make the final separation between them, and fix their state eternally in heaven or hell. Death and judgment—how solemn, tremendous, and dreadful! Though neglected, and kept far from the thoughts of the greater part of mankind, yet they are sure; the certain and unavoidable fate of all. The Divine Spirit informs us, that "*it is appointed unto all men, once to die; for that all have sinned*"—"*Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.*" Saith Moses, "*The days of our years are three score years and ten; and if, by reason of strength, they be four score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*" Though death is, of itself, very solemn and dreadful, putting a period to man's existence, and he is no more seen until the archangel's trumpet sounds, it is what follows death, that makes it so terrible to the sinner. This is judgment—the righteous judgment of God, which fixes the soul's state for all eternity.

That there is a judgment day when all men must stand before the bar of God, and have their destinies unalterably fixed, is evident from the plainest Scriptural testimony.

Saith the Psalmist of the Lord, "*He cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness.*" Paul tells, that God "*hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.*" And Jesus says, "*When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations.*" And the text declares, "*We must all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.*"

The great object of judicial proceedings, is, to vindicate the just, and condemn the wicked, upon pure principles of law and equity. The grand design of the general judgment at the last day, is, to show to all intelligent creatures, the holiness, justice and goodness of God's law and government in the salvation and eternal happiness of the righteous, and in the damnation and endless punishment of the ungodly and finally impenitent.

In farther attending to this subject, we shall

I. Mention some circumstances that will happen preparatory to the last judgment.

II. Speak of the nature of this judgment.

III. Show that it will be a day of joy to the righteous.

IV. That it will be a day of inexpressible anguish and torment to the wicked.

I. Mention some circumstances that will happen preparatory to the last judgment.

And 1st. We shall speak of the coming of Christ to judgment.

His appearance will be sudden and unexpected, at a time when the world least expects it. Therefore, in Scripture, it is represented as the coming of a thief in the night. This awful event will happen when carnal security, hardness of heart, and blind inattention to spiritual and eternal things prevail as they did in the days of Noah, when the flood came upon the world unexpected and at once, and swept away its inhabitants in their wickedness; or as the Sodomites, when, in the midst of ease and plenty, they were destroyed by a storm of fire and brimstone from heaven. If the coming of Christ to judgment, be an event so sudden, how dreadful must be the surprise and dismay of a slumbering world. While millions are engaged in midnight revels and debaucheries, dancing, drinking, gambling, like ten-fold thunders the trumpet sounds and calls them thence to the righteous judgment of the great day. His coming will be public; he will be visible to the whole universe: "*Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him.*" His appearance to judgment, shall be august and glorious beyond comprehension.

No circumstance ever took place through eternity, which gave so grand an exhibition of the majesty and grandeur of God: "*I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him*"—"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." Our Lord himself informs us, that he will appear in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, with all the holy angels, and he shall sit upon the throne of his glory. What an astonishing change now takes place! Men and devils are amazed and astonished. Is this the babe of Bethlehem, that lay in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes? Is this the despised Nazarene, that stood condemned at Pilate's bar—that was buffeted and spat upon, and scourged until all his bones might be counted? Is this the man of sorrows, streaming with blood, who climbed the heights of Calvary, bearing his heavy cross upon his mangled, bleeding shoulders; who hung upon the bloody tree by four streaming wounds; who was pierced by the soldier's spear; who gave up the ghost, crying, "It is finished!" Now he appears in all the pomp and grandeur of his Godhead. The heavens and the earth, as if affrighted, fly away from the dreadful majesty of his face. The second circumstance preparatory to the judgment of the great day which we shall mention, is, the general resurrection of the dead; of the just and unjust of Adam's numerous race. All that sleep in the dust shall awake—some to everlasting life, and others to shame and everlasting contempt. They that are in their graves, "*shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.*" The archangel's trumpet shall sound so loud that all heaven, earth, and hell shall hear. The sleeping dead in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, shall awake and spring into life.

The God of Glory sends his summons forth:
Calls the south nations, and awakes the north;
From east to west the sovereign orders spread,
Through distant worlds and regions of the dead.
No more shall Atheists mock his long delay;
His vengeance sleeps no more; behold the day!
Behold the Judge descends; his guards are nigh—
Tempests and fire attend him through the sky;
Heaven, earth and hell draw near—let all things come,
To hear my justice, and the sinner's doom.

Oh, what amazement must seize the affrighted millions of Adam's race! To the earth's remotest bound all is commotion—the graves are opening—the slumbering nations starting into life, and rising above the ground where once stood Ninevah, Babylon, Persepolis, Jerusalem, Constantinople, Rome, London, and Paris; what multitudes in a moment spring from the grave, to the astonishment of affrighted beholders! Crowds rise at once from the bloody fields where Alexander, Cæsar, Pompey, Tamerlane, and Bonaparte once triumphed. What multitudes come to view! All the myriads of Adam's race, who have lived in time, are all collected before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Oh, the solemnity of the scene! In all this immense company, there is not one idle or unconcerned spectator; no one is to be seen laughing, jesting, or strutting about, as we frequently see them now. An awfully solemn and dread solemnity seizes upon every soul, and in dismal silence await their everlasting doom.

II. Speak of the nature of this judgment. It will be a general judgment. All men shall be judged, both small and great. *"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from his goats,"* Oh! the solemn—the affecting, and astonishing separation! Parents and children, and the nearest and most tender ties will then be torn in sunder. Fallen angels will be judged also.—So saith the apostle Jude: *"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day."* And it was in reference to the dread events of this tremendous day, that the devils cried out to our Lord, in the days of his flesh, *"Hast thou come to torment us before the time?"*

In that day will be judged all the words, thoughts, and actions of the children of men: *"and the dead were judged out of those things written in the books, and according to their works."* In our text, we are told that *"we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad."* Every conversation and every word that has been spoken, shall then be examined. Says our Lord, *"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment."* The secret thoughts of all hearts shall then pass in public review before the impartial bar of God: *"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel."* A solemn and awful day this, when judgment shall be given upon all the deeds, words, and thoughts of mankind; where every secret act, idle word, and every vain imagination, will be laid open to the public view of an assembled universe.

III. Show that it will be a day of joy to the righteous.

The seeds of this joy are sown in this life. As they are pardoned and justified by the word and atonement of Christ, the sting of death is removed. When they have lively views of the glory of God in Christ Jesus, and feel the witness of God's Word and Spirit, that their sins are pardoned, when by faith they can behold the land of promise, oh, how pleasant the thought of the last judgment! And as they die in Christ, a foundation is laid for a glorious and happy resurrection. So soon as the heart strings are broken, and nature expires, as soon as the soul and body are separated, the immortal spirit enters a state of positive blessedness. But the lifeless body is laid in the grave, and sleeps until the morning of the resurrection. Christ died, and lay in the grave; he conquered it; he made it a pleasant bed of rest to his followers. Hence the Scriptures speak of falling asleep in Jesus, sleeping in Christ, &c. Says the apostle, "*Them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him;*" that is, their souls from heaven, and their bodies from the tombs; and, though parted awhile by death, they shall now be re-united. The resurrection will be to them a pleasing prelude to the judgment of the last day. For, says the Spirit, they shall rise first. Their corruptible bodies will be raised spiritual and incorruptible; they shall be raised in unfading beauty—beautiful and immortal in the likeness of Christ. As their names are written in the Lamb's book of life, and engraved upon the palms of both his hands, not one of them will be overlooked or forgotten. The poorest beggar, or the meanest slave, shall not be passed by.—When the Son of God comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, "*He shall send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heaven to another.*"

The Lord Jesus Christ, who purchased them with his blood, and ransomed them by his death, will own them before the assembled universe. He will separate them from the wicked as the shepherd doth his sheep from the goats. He will place them on his right hand as a mark of high honor and dignity, as a token of his love for them.

But what will consummate their happiness, and raise them to the summit of glory, will be the joyful sentence, "*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*"

Last of all, they shall go away into everlasting life. They shall go home with Christ to his Father's house, and there, as vessels meet for the Master's use, they will be possessed of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. They shall be with Christ where he is, and shall forever behold his glory; and through all eternity, they shall taste joys such as

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man” to conceive.

IV. It will be a day of inexpressible anguish and torment to the wicked.

The ungodly and finally impenitent will now be ripe for destruction. Having spent all their lives in sowing to the flesh, they shall now reap a harvest of immortal woe; having spent their lives in sin, they will now receive the wages thereof—eternal death. How intolerable their loss! Their day of grace and all hope of mercy are gone forever. They lose their souls, worth more than ten thousand worlds; they lose God, the source of all happiness; they lose Christ and his salvation—heaven, with all its unspeakable joys; and, to consummate their anguish and make them vessels capable of enduring all the wrath of God, their souls and bodies are re-united, and the dreadful sentence of *“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,”* now fixes their awful doom. This is, indeed, the solemn, dreadful harvest day; the tares are separated from the wheat, and, bound in bundles, are cast into everlasting fire. Oh, how deep, and large, and wide, must Tophet be—how dreadfully immense the pile of fire, and much wood!

S E R M O N X I V .

THE CHARACTER, HISTORY, AND END OF THE FOOL.

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.—PSALM xiv. 1.

Two things in the text demand our attention:

1st. The character mentioned—THE FOOL—that is, the man who is destitute of true wisdom, or the knowledge of God, and who acts an irrational part in matters of the greatest importance.

2d. Something predicated of the fool, very expressive of his character. He “*hath said in his heart, there is no God.*” This expresses the highest grade of unbelief, which is the root of all sin, blinds the mind, hardens the heart, and sinks the soul beneath the damning weight of sin. It is probable the fool would disclaim the character of an atheist; perhaps he would tell you that reason and the light of nature, prove that there is a God. Yet, “*he says in his heart, there is no God*”—“*The heart, or spiritual part of man, is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, so much so, that every imagination is only evil continually.*” As every thought, word, and action of the fool proceeds from this desperately wicked heart, the consequence is, that the whole of his conversation and conduct is sin. Therefore, his heart says, “*There is no God,*” by the words and actions that proceed from it, for these constitute the image of his mind, and speak the language of his heart.

In the further prosecution of this subject, we shall

- I. Delineate the character of the fool.
- II. Relate his history and end.

I. Delineate the character of the fool.

Perhaps there is no character more contemptible than that of a fool. Hence it is considered an insufferable insult to call a man a fool. Were I to say that I now address a congregation of fools, or that I believe a majority of my hearers are fools, I expect I would give a general offence to my audience. To be

as modest on the subject as possible, we will suppose there is one fool in this assembly; and, if there be, he is an object of pity; his condition is so wretched, that human language cannot describe it. My present business, then, is to delineate the character of the fool so plainly, that he may see himself, be influenced to apply to Christ, who is the essential wisdom of God, and learn from him the things that belong to his eternal peace.

A fool, then, is a person destitute of wisdom, and who, in all his conduct, acts like one void of reason. In Scripture, the fool and the sinner are synonymous, and no term is more expressive of the character of a Christless sinner, than that of a fool; for, never was a simpleton more destitute of common sense, than the Christless sinner is of the knowledge of God, and of that wisdom which leads to true happiness in time and through eternity. As the idiot or natural fool is destitute of all useful knowledge, and of that information which beautifies the mind and dignifies man, so the unconverted sinner is totally ignorant of the moral beauty and excellency of the attributes of God, and blind to the immaculate purity of his holy law, to the spiritual meaning of his Word, and the infinite evil of sin. Never was an idiot a greater stranger to the knowledge of geometry, astronomy, and the higher grades of scientific learning, than the unconverted sinner is to the knowledge of God, the joys of pardoned sin, the consolations of the Holy Ghost, and the believer's hopes of heaven. Another peculiarity in the character of the idiot, is, he is void of wisdom; so every part of his conduct is vain, foolish, and irrational; but this bears no comparison to the brutish irrationality of the Christless sinner. Did you see a man bartering away an immense earthly inheritance for an embroidered cap, a gay feather, or a fine go-cart; or did you see him selling a crown, a throne, and a kingdom, for a ginger-cake or drink of grog, would you not be convinced that he was verily a fool? Or, did you see him, in cool blood, cutting his own throat, or driving a dagger into his own heart, would you not conclude that he was a distracted fool? But all this falls far short of the brutish and distracted conduct of the poor Christless sinner who parts with heaven and all its glories for the vain pleasures of this world; and who, in spite of all the entreaties of the ministers of the Gospel, the warnings of God, and the motions of conscience, sells his soul for a trifle, and finds his way to hell. Did you see a man, in the season for preparing his ground and putting in his crop, spending his precious time in the most frivolous amusements, without striking a single stroke of work until the season was gone, would you not believe that he was a fool, and his conduct very irrational? But all this bears no comparison to the distracted conduct of the Christless sinner, who trifles away the only season of salvation. Suppose a prince were to say to a

poor malefactor condemned to die, I will assign you a certain business for one hour, and if you are industriously engaged during that hour, and lose not one moment, I will not only pardon you, but give you the finest inheritance upon the earth. Did you see this poor wretch spending every moment of his precious hour in the most frivolous and sinful amusements, such as fiddling, dancing, building cob-houses, or catching flies, sporting with his fate, and treating this proposal with contempt—would you not conclude that he was a madman and self-murderer? But all this falls far short of the distracted madness of the Christless sinner. He is sent into this world to prepare for eternity; his life is but a dream—a bubble, or a morning tale; he knows not the moment death will fix his state for eternity; in the short and uncertain time allotted him, work of vast importance must be performed, or he must be damned forever. He has to forsake the service of that old serpent, the devil, and enlist under the banners of Christ; he has the enmity of his heart against God and holiness, to subdue; his strong corruptions, ungovernable passions and propensities must be overcome; he has temptations to resist oppositions, persecutions and reproaches to endure; he has to obtain a new heart and spirit of Christ, and a growing qualification for heaven, without which he must sink forever beneath the wrath of God, in a lake of fire burning with brimstone, where the smoke of his torment shall ascend forever and ever. Yet he will not attend to his eternal interest; he hates the path that leads to true happiness; he voluntarily rejects eternal life, and he chooses the torments of hell as his portion forever. All the arguments of men will not induce him to begin the work of his soul's salvation. Perhaps he will acknowledge the propriety and necessity of religion, that he wishes to obtain it, and would give the world to possess it; but bring the matter close to him—propose to him *now* to flee from the wrath to come; he raises a multitude of objections, and brings forward many absurd excuses; he tells you he has no disposition to flee the wrath to come; therefore, he must wait until God gives it to him. He is afraid to commence seeking religion, lest he draw back; for he has seen many who started to obtain it, who again returned to their former sinful condition, and it is much better never to begin, than to make a start, and then backslide. He fears that, if he should commence seeking religion, he would be laughed at by all who know him. The cross is too heavy; the persecutions of the world cannot be endured. Then his dear companions, his beloved sins, and his vain pleasures, are so pleasing, it would be like death to part with them. It is inconvenient at present—like the sluggard, he cries, *a little more slumber, a little more sleep—a little more folding of the*

hands for sleep; he says, I will put it off till next year, or some more distant period. Thus he neglects the salvation of his soul, and treats the offers of mercy with contempt. But he hugs to his heart that poisonous viper, sin, that stings him to the inmost soul, and, with pleasure, he kisses the dagger that pierces his soul. Now, what think ye of the Christless sinner? Is he not verily a fool? But, to be more particular—

1st. He is a *self-conceited* fool; hence, saith the wise man: *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes;* that is, he is too wise in his own conceit, to be taught or set right. The opinions of his father and grandfather, or the sentiments of some old carnal formalist, or some wrong-headed enthusiast, to whom he is strongly attached, the peculiarities of his beloved party, or the notions of some old, wealthy, drunken deists, who bear the pompous titles of Majors, Colonels, Generals, Doctors, Judges, or Members of Congress; these have infinitely more weight with him, than all that is written in the Bible. Hence he boasts of his great information, his superior and mighty powers of reason; when, at the same time, in the view of reason and common sense, he is an arrant fool; for he is afraid of being convinced, and he secretly wishes to be deceived; he never tries to investigate the subject, and impartially examines the evidence on both sides of the question; but, like a *confirmed* fool, he collects every thing like an argument to strengthen his delusions, harden his heart, and put out the light of conscience. The broad road to hell is so dear and pleasing to him, that, to forsake it, would be intolerable. Therefore, as our Lord expresses it, "*he hates the light;*" he shuns conviction as he would death. When, by the strength of argument and the force of truth, he is confounded and his mouth closed, he becomes angry; he spits out the venom of hell as he substitutes loud laughter for reason. What is still more astonishing, like the madman who thinks himself a crowned head, and that all mankind are his slaves and vassals, the poor Christless sinner, while he rushes along the broad road to hell, tells you, that the religion of Jesus Christ is too mean and contemptible a thing for his lofty soul to embrace; and that, professing to feel the love of God shed abroad in the heart, is mere hypocrisy, or the effect of enthusiasm on weak minds; but by his conduct, he tells you, that, to indulge in frothy conversation, to profane the Sabbath, to frolic and dance, to drink like a beast, and swear and curse like a devil, are employments worthy of rational and reflecting men, and that these things are always done by those who are truly wise and great.

2d. He is a *deceitful* fool. Solomon tells us, "*The wisdom of the prudent is, to understand his way, but the folly of fools is deceit;*" that is, they try to deceive the world and themselves. The fool is a base hypocrite, yet there is no man upon earth who

cries out more vehemently against hypocrites; but all the time it is not hypocrisy he hates, but experimental religion and practical holiness. As the persecuting Romans of old dressed up the Christian martyrs in the skins of wild beasts, that they might be torn to pieces by dogs, so the fool dresses holiness and the fear of God in the filthy garment of hypocrisy, that the dogs of hell may join with him to tear them to pieces; yet, as was observed, he is a base hypocrite, for he strives to make the world believe that he is a man of great rational powers, and possessed of a very strong mind, when, at the same time, in matters of the greatest importance, that is, in the affairs of his soul's salvation, he acts with worse than brutish irrationality; he wishes men to believe that he is a person of strict honesty, truth and honor, yet he often takes advantage of the ignorance or necessity of his neighbor, and purchases property for half price, or sells his own at double its value. The fool not only deceives others, but also deceives himself, for he builds his hopes of heaven upon the supposed goodness of his heart, his pretended morality, his charitable actions, his partial reformations, or his transient joys; but that which renders his deception most fatal, is, that the fool wishes to be deceived.

3d. Another property of the fool is, that *he makes a mock at sin*; that is, he thinks it an innocent, pleasing thing. Tell him of its infinite evil, how filthy and abominable it appears in the sight of God; tell him that it ruins the souls of men, and brings upon them all the torments of hell—the fool will laugh you to scorn; he will mock at all you say concerning the dreadful consequences of sin, and contend there is no harm in it.

4th. Another property of the fool, is, that he hates knowledge. Saith Solomon: "*Fools hate knowledge.*" Again: "*Fools despise wisdom and instruction.*" God has placed in the hands of the fool that most valuable of books, the Bible. From this precious volume men may obtain the knowledge of God and his Son Jesus Christ; here men may learn that wisdom which will lead them to endless happiness; but this book the fool detests, at least, he has no desire to read it; he would be much more pleased with some silly novel or wild romance; these he delights to read; but his Bible, if he has one, lies neglected in some obscure corner of his house.

The Sovereign of the Universe has appointed one day in seven to be particularly devoted to the acquisition of the knowledge of God; but the fool hates God, he has no desire to know him, and instruction and wisdom he despises; therefore, he spends the Sabbath in slumbering, visiting his neighbors, walking round his farm, or in vain and worldly conversation; perhaps he never opens his Bible, or if he does, he is not at all interested with its contents, and when he has hastily perused a

chapter, he closes the book, rejoicing that he has got rid of his irksome task; he never bows his knee before God, either in secret or in his family; and perhaps he strives to banish from his mind all serious thoughts of God, death, judgment, and eternity. As the fool hates instruction and wisdom, so he cannot bear the company and conversation of experimental and lively Christians. The conversation of such persons is intolerable; for it is contrary to his nature; it stings his conscience, and disturbs his carnal peace; therefore, he does what he can to avoid it; he hates and shuns the faithful minister or religious friend, who, with tears in his eyes, shows him his danger, and entreats him to fly to Christ. In a word, his chief happiness consists in the darkness of ignorance, and in living at the greatest possible distance from God and all that bear his image.

5th. Another property of the fool is, that he is *obstinate* and *incorrigible*. Says the wise man, "*Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.*" These words may refer to all the methods the Lord uses to awaken sinners, and persuade them to flee the wrath to come; therefore, they include all the entreaties of the ministers of the Gospel, and all the motions and drawings of the Holy Spirit; at the same time, they represent the obstinacy, wickedness, and incorrigible rebellion of the sinner against God. Sabbath after Sabbath, and year after year, the Lord calls the fool to repentance; Christ knocks at his heart, and salvation comes near unto him; but he refuses to submit; the world and its pleasures so possess his heart, that he will rather risk all the torments of hell than part with them; sometimes, like Ahab, he humbles himself for a time, and walks softly; but he soon resists the light, and returns to sin. Again, like Felix, he is made to tremble under the awful apprehensions of the wrath of God; but he puts off seeking the salvation of his soul till a more convenient season. Again, like Agrippa, he is almost persuaded to become a Christian, but some beloved sin keeps the Lord Jesus from possessing his heart. When the more gentle calls of divine mercy prove ineffectual, the Lord bruises him in the mortar of affliction. By losses, diseases, and alarming dispensations of Providence, he is called to repent and flee the wrath to come, but still his foolishness will not depart from him. When he feels the hand of God heavy upon him; when he is confined to a sick bed, and death and eternity stare him in the face, like Pharaoh, he promises amendment, and pleads with the people of God to pray for him; but no sooner is affliction withdrawn, than, Pharaoh-like, his heart becomes more hardened than before, until, at last, by repeated acts of obstinacy and rebellion, the Spirit of God is provoked to withdraw; his heart

grows hard like the nether millstone; his conscience is seared as with a hot iron, and his damnation is sealed.

6th. Another trait in the character of the fool is, he is a *practical atheist*. “*The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.*” Take notice. The fool does not say with his tongue, *There is no God.* No: *he hath said in his heart.* He will tell you his unerring reason teaches him there is a God; that this is proved by the light of nature and the works of creation; yet, *he hath said in his heart, there is no God; his heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;* all his actions proceed from this deceitful and wicked heart; they speak its genuine language—and that is, “*There is no God,*” and this will be clearly proved by these considerations:

1st. God has revealed himself in the Bible, as a holy, just, and sin-hating God; he has declared that *the wages of sin is death;* that anger and wrath, tribulation and anguish, is what attends upon every soul that doeth evil; that the eternal plagues of hell is the consequence of sin. But does the fool believe these declarations? Let his conduct testify; and its language is—*There is no such God;* for he drinks in iniquity like waters; he profanes the Sabbath; he lies, cheats, swears and drinks to excess; he indulges in obscene discourse, in revelling, rioting, dancing, and in many acts of daring wickedness. Now did the fool firmly believe that such conduct is as inseparably connected with the torments of hell as the cause is with the effect, he would not dare to indulge himself in the love and practice of them; therefore, it follows that, by this conduct, his heart says: *There is no God.*

2d. God has declared, that *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;* and that *without holiness, no man shall see the Lord;* that *he that believeth not, shall be damned.*—Does the fool believe these declarations? No; for, by his careless, profane, and sinful conduct, he declares that God is a liar; he makes a mock at sin; he jests at religion; he stifles his convictions and quenches the motions of the Holy Spirit; indeed, the whole tenor of his conduct declares that his heart says, *There is no God.*

But, to finish our description of the fool. His whole heart is enmity against God, and his whole nature is sin; *from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet there is no soundness, but wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores.*

He is a fool, in the highest sense of the word; for he is destitute of the knowledge of the nature and attributes of God; “*his understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart,*” and “*the God of this world has blinded his mind, lest the glorious light of the Gospel of Christ should shine unto*

his heart." His affections are alienated from God, and set upon inferior objects; therefore, he is said to be "*a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God.*"

His memory is treacherous as a riddle that lets the precious grain run through, but easily retains the trash. In a word, his heart, which, in Scripture, signifies his soul, is a sink of wickedness, the very image of that old serpent, the devil. "*It is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?*" and Christ declares, that out of it proceed "*evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.*" Therefore, the fool's heart is termed, *an uncircumcised heart—a hard heart—a stony heart—a froward heart—a heart departing from God—a backsliding heart—a proud heart—a heart full of hypocrisy.* This is the description given in Scripture of the heart or soul of the fool. Say, does it not strongly resemble the devil? Now, view his body or fleshy part, as it is acted upon by this totally depraved soul, and reason must acknowledge that it can act upon no higher principle than that of the brute. Its highest object, then, is the gratification of its appetites and propensities. Therefore, it follows as an unquestionable truth, that the fool is a compound being, consisting of the brutal and infernal nature. In a word, he is half beast, half devil.

After having given this description of the fool, some may be disposed to conclude that he is altogether a prayerless creature. This, however, is a mistake. He is a praying fool; he prays morning and evening, day and night. In a word, he is always praying. We will conclude our description of the fool, with a SPECIMEN of his constant prayer; and the desires of his heart habitually run out in such language as this: O, Lord, give me all my portion in this life, let me have my heaven here; I ask not thy love and favor; I desire not the knowledge of thee; I do not pray to be saved from sin; but do thou grant that I may be rich, wealthy, prosperous, and great; take thy Holy Spirit altogether from me, keep death and eternity out of my view.—Let my conscience be seared as with a hot iron, that I may enjoy all the pleasure sin can afford. I love sin; I love the indulgence of my carnal appetites; I am delighted with the road to hell. Oh, Lord, let me go to hell, and this is all I desire at thy hand. Amen!

II. Relate the history and end of the fool. He was born a fool; "*he was shapen in iniquity, conceived in sin, and born like a wild ass's colt;*" he came into the world destitute of the moral image of God, which consists in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness; he was born in the very image and likeness of that old serpent, the devil. As soon as he was capable of exercising his powers of reason, he gave clear evidence that he

was a fool; for it was evident to every discerning person that he was ignorant of God and his Son Jesus Christ; therefore, he had no communion with God; he had no desire to be acquainted with him, nor to prepare for death and eternity. At a very early period, he manifested an obstinate and rebellious disposition. Fretfulness, discontent, anger, revenge, self-will, disobedience, and a total inattention to religion, discovered themselves in his early life; as he grew up, with the greatest facility, and in opposition to all admonitions, he learned to sing vain songs, to use obscene language, to swear, to violate the Sabbath, and to perform many mischievous tricks. It was almost impossible to constrain him to read the Scriptures, or to pay the smallest attention to the things of God and religion. In short, the more he was entreated to attend to the affairs of his soul, the more clearly did his opposition to them appear.— When he arrived at the years of maturity, his chief desire was respectability; but, like a fool, he took the wrong method to obtain it; he decked his dying body in the habiliments of gaiety and extravagance, while his soul remained black and deformed like the devil, and polluted with the filth of sin. To add to his respectability, he selected companions; but, alas! he made a fool's choice; he associated with those who would lead him further from God and on the way to hell; the gay, the thoughtless, and the profane, were his bosom companions. In order to attain to as much importance as possible among his associates, he had to learn various popular, scientific branches. Thus he had to learn to drink, swear, dance, fight, and take the name of God in vain. In short, to use a phrase of his own, he had to become very much of a devil.

In order to become popular, and enjoy as much of the pleasure of sin as possible, he attended every frolic and dance within his reach; indeed, he was continually employed in passing from one scene of dissipation and extravagance to another. However, he met with many interruptions in his wild career; for conscience, like a common disturber of the peace, gave him much uneasiness, and repeatedly told him, the end "*of these things is death.*" The Holy Spirit whispered, "*O do not that abominable thing.*" These warnings often created uneasiness, and put him to an awful stand; then it seemed as if heaven and hell were striving for him. Sometimes he was constrained to pray in secret, and resolve that he would repent and forsake sin. But the thought of forsaking the pleasures of sin and his companions in wickedness, was too intolerable to be endured; and he was brought to his wits' end to devise means by which he might stifle conviction and lay his conscience into a dead sleep. We shall, therefore, notice the manner by which this dreadful object was accomplished.

And the first thing he did, was, to make out a large list of hypocrites; he strictly watched the conduct of professors of religion, that he might find out their faults and misgivings; he discovered that such a one, who prayed in his family, and whom he had frequently seen at a communion table, had been discovered somewhat intoxicated; therefore, he entered this professor on his list; a second had taken advantage of his neighbor in a bargain; a third had been seen in a passion and using unbecoming language. These, with many more of the same description, he enrolls with the first. These discoveries afforded him much satisfaction, and with a smiling countenance and taunting sneer, he would relate the circumstances in every company, and often intimated that all professors were hypocrites, and that the religion of Jesus was a deception. This list served on all occasions as a plaster to his troubled conscience; and he endeavored to believe that it was unnecessary for him to seek religion, as there was no reality in it.

Still, however, in his sober moments, his conscience would annoy him, and disturb his carnal peace, by reminding him of the necessity of seeking and obtaining religion; then he would try to silence conscience by the following mode of reasoning: Why, said he, none of the younger class of respectable persons make any profession of religion; therefore, were I to be concerned about it, I would become quite unpopular, and sink into contempt. Were I to attempt to serve God, I would be hissed at, and sneered out of all genteel society. Then he would go to the tavern, and, in company with his wicked companions, he would laugh, and drink, and sing, and swear, for the purpose of driving away his convictions, and that he might become confirmed in his determinations to go on in sin, he would go to the ball-room, and there try to drive away all serious thoughts, by sporting and dancing. By such struggles as these, the fool often found the the way to hell a hard and difficult way; sometimes when under a sermon, the fool has heard his case so exactly described, that he has seen plainly that death and hell would be the end of his career; then his conscience would alarm him; but, as he thought it as disgraceful to be seriously engaged in making his peace with God, as to be found stealing, therefore, he would strive to look round the congregation with the countenance of a hero, and appear as careless and undaunted as possible; and when conviction would seize his heart with greater force, and no other effort would avail, he would rise up, leave the house, and get out of hearing as quickly as possible. If a faithful minister, or zealous Christian friend, would at any time persuade the fool to flee the wrath to come, he would answer with a sneer or laugh, treat all they said with contempt, and if they would repeatedly converse with him on this subject, he would become

angry, and insult them with such language as the following: Give yourself no concern about me; if I go to hell it is no man's business; mind yourself; give me none of your jaw.

When the poor, unhappy fool, would meet with his companions in sin, he would drink until he became basely intoxicated; then he would curse and blaspheme like an infernal fiend; he would get into wild riots, quarrel and fight, and sometimes get his eyes blackened. When he came home, and began to cool off, as he called it, he would feel sick, and his body miserably disordered, then he would calculate his expenses, and bitterly regret his extravagance, for the money he had gained by his honest industry, and which should have been laid out for necessary purposes, was wasted and gone, his debts unpaid and heavy demands hanging over him; but, what was worse than all, his conscience, like the never-dying worm of hell, gnawed and stung him like a poisonous viper, and his bitter reflections were intolerable. Now, he would solemnly promise to God that he would reform his life, withdraw from his wicked companions, and no more touch the intoxicating poison. For a few weeks you would suppose that he was about to alter his course, and he appeared quite another man; but, upon a certain public day, he fell in with his former companions in sin. They handed to him the intoxicating cup. Said the fool secretly, I may take one dram in moderation; there can be no danger in that. He took the glass; he drank; he sat down and joined them in their vain conversation; the liquor went round, his conscience recoiled; his former resolutions stared him in the face. O, said his sinful companions, be a good fellow, don't be a whining hypocrite; if you are so reserved, people will say you are going to be religious; there is no harm in drinking in moderation, if a person do not make a beast of himself. Then the fool in spite of all the efforts of conscience drank again. By this time, he felt his blood warmed and his appetite inflamed, and he went at it like a confirmed fool, and swallowed it down, draught after draught.

When he cooled off again, the bitter reflection of his conscience was like a hell upon earth, and he felt miserable beyond description. When he thought of his former resolutions and the promises he made to God, which he had broken, he felt ashamed and mortified, and he determined never to make another resolution; then off he went to the tavern and bottle, and in company with his sinful associates, time after time, he tried to drink, and laugh, and dance, and swear away all solemn reflections about God and a future state. On a certain occasion, the fool took dangerously ill; he was laid upon a sick bed; his disease increased, and seemed to baffle the power of medicine; his physician despaired of curing him, and his friends expressed their fears that his case was hopeless; death stared him in the

face, and conscience again awoke and placed all his sins before him; the wrath of God and the horrors of hell affrighted him. Now, he acknowledged himself a fool, and with bitterness of soul lamented his ungodly life, misspent seasons of grace, and stifled convictions; he prayed and cried for mercy; then the language of his heart was, O, that God would spare me for a few days or years longer. I would forsake all my wicked companions and ungodly practices; I would diligently attend to the means of grace; I would keep every Sabbath holy to the Lord; I would regularly attend the preaching of the word, and hear as for eternity; and I would give myself no rest until my peace were made with God. Then eternity and eternal things employed his mind from day to day, until relieved of his disorder; but, as soon as flattering hopes of recovery took place, his convictions began to subside; as his health and bodily strength increased, his serious attention to the work of his soul's salvation decreased; when he was restored to his health, his heart became harder than before, and he returned to his old sins, as "*the dog to his vomit, or the sow, that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.*"

The poor, unhappy fool, to quiet conscience, repeatedly promised that, at some future period, he would repent of his sins and seek religion, and as often left his promises unperformed.—At length, he became acquainted with a profane, drunken profligate, who was a man of wealth, and bore the pompous title of Major, Colonel, Judge, or General; but he was a hater of God and religion. This contemptible sinner hinted to the fool that the religion of Jesus Christ was a mere deception; that the Bible was a cheat, the fabrication of designing men; that there was no future state, nor general judgment; and that men had not, after death, to give an account of the deeds done in the body. He furnished him with Paine's Age of Reason, and the works of Volney, Voltaire, and Bolingbroke. This confirmed him a fool, for infidelity put the cap-stone upon his folly. Now, he shouted victory, and he viewed all the efforts of reason, conscience, and the religion of Jesus Christ, as incapable of disturbing his peace, and all the admonitions, reproofs, and entreaties of religious friends, as lost when addressed to him. Then the fool could tell what wonders his unerring reason had discovered; he had found out that the Bible was a deception, when he had never read it thro' once in the course of his life, and knew little more of its contents than a Shawnee or Choctaw. If a person asked him for the evidences of the truth of the system on which he is venturing into eternity, he would reply that he had incon-testible evidence. And what was it? All the half-read fops, who never made the Bible their study; Doctors, Majors, Colonels, Generals, Judges, and Members of Congress, were deists.

If he were asked for his unanswerable arguments, by which he supported his system, he would say that he had them at command. And what were they? *Profane witticisms, sneers, jests at sacred things, and extravagant, loud laughter.*

Time would fail to dwell upon particulars. View the fool thro' every stage of his life, unless at some solemn seasons when the Spirit of God was powerfully striving with him, and you would see nothing but the symptoms of *extreme folly* about him. Did he happen in company with some lively experimental Christians, whose conversation was altogether of Christ, heaven, and the life of religion; he was miserable beyond description; such conversation was contrary to his vile, depraved nature; therefore, presently he was up and gone. If a faithful minister, or pious Christian conversed with him about the state of his soul, he would give no answer; but he would appear confused and look angry; urge him upon the subject, and he would be highly offended and show the most daring impudence; if he answered what was said to him, it was with insolence and contempt. See him on the Sabbath; like the sluggard, he is stretched on his bed, sleeping away the precious season of grace. Let him rise ever so early during the week, the Sabbath morning was the fool's time to sleep. Perhaps breakfast is nearly ready to go on the table before he is disposed to rise. See him during the course of the day; if he is reading, it is not the Bible, nor a religious book, but a history, a novel, or newspaper; notice his conversation on this holy day, he has not a word to say about the great concerns of his soul. No, he speaks of the world, and the things of it. See him at the place of worship; he is like a fish out of water; every thing is contrary to his nature; to sit out a sermon is like Algerine bondage. Sometimes you see him in one part of the assembly; in less than ten minutes, he is in another place. Presently look about you again, and he is up and gone; he is at the spring, or conversing with some of his ungodly companions on the most sinful and profane subjects. See, during a sacramental occasion—every day, if he is about—you will see him on the outside, sitting away off at a distance on a log, or standing at the foot of a tree with some profane ruffians, with his hat on, talking and laughing. If the Spirit of God visit the assembly with a heavenly breeze, and some happy souls, filled with the love of God, are constrained to praise and glorify him; or if poor awakened sinners are constrained to cry for mercy, presently you may see the fool climbing a tree or springing upon some high log, stretching his neck, straining his eyes, and gazing with a grin of contempt, displaying the malice and enmity of a devil. The fifteenth day of December, 1811, was a Sabbath the fool profaned as much, and upon which he committed as much sin as on any Sabbath he had ever seen. The fool can

remember it himself; he was remarkably hardened, vain, foolish, and wicked on that day; he lay down that night as prayerless and hardened as a devil; but about the hour of two next morning something transpired that, for the moment, brought him to his senses. The earth began to shake. It was to the fool like the midnight cry of Egypt; it bore some resemblance to the sounding of the archangel's trumpet. On that morning, on the twenty-third of January, and on the seventh of February, the heart of the fool was obliged to confess there was a God, and a terrible God; he was convinced it was a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God; then he saw God frowning, hell gaping, and storms of vengeance ready to burst upon his guilty soul. For a time he prayed and cried for mercy; he attended upon the preaching of the Gospel every opportunity, by day and night; and, for a time, like Saul, he appeared to be quite another man. But, alas! he was never a new man; for, like Lot's wife, he looked back to Sodom; he longed after his old sins, and presently the shaking of the earth, like the preaching of the Gospel, became an old thing, and he felt such a hankering anxiety after his old sins, that, now and then, in spite of conscience, he complied with the temptations of Satan; his convictions died away; his heart grew harder and harder. The unclean spirit returned, "*and found his house empty, swept and garnished,*" with prayers, tears, duties, and reformations. And "*he brought with him seven other devils more wicked than himself, and they entered in and dwelt there.*" So the last state of the fool was worse than the first. Perhaps this was the last call the fool ever had.

Time would fail me to pursue the history of the fool through middle life, and on to old age. I must pass over a variety of occurrences in his life; how he obtained the victory over his conscience; how the Holy Spirit gave him his last call; and, when this was resisted, how he left him forever; how the Lord Jesus Christ sealed his heart under the curse, so that all the powers of heaven and earth could not open it; how he went on from sin to sin with horrid rapidity, till his cup of wrath was full to the brim, and he was ripe for hell. On these particulars I cannot dwell. I would, therefore, hasten to his end.

And suffice it to say, he died accursed of God when his soul was separated from his body, and the black flaming vultures of hell began to encircle him on every side; his conscience awoke from its long sleep, and roared like ten thousand peals of thunder; then all the horrid crimes of his past life stared him in his face in all their glowing colors; then the remembrance of misimproved sermons and sacramental occasions, flashed like streams of forked lightning through his tortured soul; then the reflection that he had slighted the mercy and blood of the Son

of God; that he had despised and rejected him, was like a poisoned arrow piercing his heart; when the fiends of hell dragged him into the infernal gulf he roared and screamed and yelled like a devil; when, while Indians, Pagans, and Mahometans, stood amazed, and upbraided him, falling, like Lucifer, from the meridian blaze of the Gospel and the threshold of heaven, sinking into the liquid boiling waves of hell, and accursed sinners of Tyre, and Sidon, and Sodom, and Gomorrah, sprang to the right and left, and made way for him to pass them, and fall lower down even to the deepest cavern in the flaming abyss—here his conscience, like a never-dying worm, stings him and forever gnaws his soul, and the slighted blood of the Son of God communicates ten thousand hells in one. Now, through the blazing flames of hell he sees that heaven he has lost; that exceeding great and eternal weight of glory he has sold for the devil's pottage. In those pure regions he sees his father or mother, his sisters or brothers, and those persons who sat under the same means of grace with him, and whom he derided as fools, fanatics, and hypocrites. They are far beyond the impassable gulf; they shine brighter than the sun when he shineth in his strength, and walk the golden streets of the new Jerusalem; but he is lost and damned forever.

The last thing we shall mention in the history of the fool is—when he lifted up his eyes in hell, he found a dictionary explaining the meaning of all the profane language he used during his life. Now he perfectly understands the meaning of those words he was in the habit of using in this world without ever reflecting on their signification. Such expressions as the following were very common with the fool in this life: I'll be damned; God damn his soul if it was not so and so. Now the fool perfectly understands the meaning of these terms in all their horrid emphasis, for God has heard and answered his prayer; he has damned his soul in hell. He could now tell you that the dreadful meaning of these words frightened the stoutest devils, and fills all the flaming vaults of hell with the most hideous shrieks and yells. In this life, when the fool was offended at any one, his common phrase was, such a one is a damned fool. Now he perfectly understands the meaning of the phrase. When he surveys his life and reflects on the many offers of salvation he refused; the manner in which he misspent his precious time, and misimproved all the means of grace, he is constrained to confess that he is emphatically a fool—a damned fool—for he is damned in hell forever and ever.

S E R M O N X V .

THE SINNER'S GUIDE TO HELL.

Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction.—MATTHEW vii. 13.

ALL the inhabitants of this world are swiftly passing to eternity. Two places, heaven and hell, are ordained as the final abodes of the children of men.

In this and the following verse, is presented the great contrast between the two roads leading to these different places: “*Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in therat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*”

Our design is, to speak of the broad way, the wide, beaten path, in which have travelled numberless millions of Adam’s race.

The broad way is simply a life of sin and rebellion against God, and is called a way, because it leads to hell and ends in eternal destruction. As the traveller who pursues perseveringly a journey is sure to arrive at its end, so he who persists in a life of sin is sure to land in hell.

The road to hell is here called a broad way, because a majority of the human race, in every generation, has travelled it; and by far the greater part of the numberless inhabitants of the earth at present are upon this broad road, rushing to hell with awful rapidity.

If we suppose one hundred thousand men drawn up in solid column on a highway, it must be very broad indeed to contain them; but this would bear no comparison to that broad way upon which are travelling continually hundreds of millions. Oh, how broad is the road to hell! Oh, what a crowded country must hell be! The great design of the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Jesus Christ, of the mission of the Holy Spirit, with all his operations upon heart, and of the preaching of the

Gospel, together with the promises, calls, and threatenings of God himself, is, to bring sinners from this broad road which leads to ruin; and to persuade them to pursue the narrow way that leads to life and immortal glory.

Well, if sinners are determined to go to hell, we will endeavor to show them the way; and that we may do this, we will try to lay the path so plain before you that you cannot miss it, provided you follow our directions with diligence.

In discussing this subject further, we shall

I. Give some plain directions, by following which, sinners will be sure to find the way.

II. Point out some of the difficulties of the way, and how they may be overcome.

III. Make some observations upon the end of the way.

I. Then, in order to direct you the road to hell, we shall

1st. Make some remarks upon the road itself. It has been said above that the road was broad, crowded with an innumerable multitude of passengers.

Some declare that there are many paths leading to hell; but methinks that all these paths are included in, and constitute the broad road. Like the street in a city, there are the paved walks for footmen, and the broader part for horsemen and carriages. The orthodox hypocrite has a smooth, nice path, paved with convictions, plausible experiences, Christian duties, tears, enlargements, and melting frames of mind.

The moral formalist has a rough, hard pavement, consisting of his religious education, his standing in the church, speculative knowledge, orthodox principles and good desires.

The deist or infidel has his passage snugly causewayed with reason, natural religion, and many false pretensions of respect for the God of Nature.

The genteel, polite sensualist travels along a graded, pleasant pavement, on which he goes sporting, singing, skipping and dancing.

The profane sinner, the swinish drunkard, the filthy debauchee, the scoifler at God and religion; all these travel the rough and filthy part of this broad road, wading to their knees in mud and mire, and besmeared with the filth of sin.

2d. If you are resolved to pursue the downward road to hell, you should be prepared for the journey. A wise man with a journey before him, makes all the necessary preparation before he starts. The Christian who travels the narrow way to the heavenly country, must be clad in the Gospel armor, that he may withstand the attacks of all the enemies he may meet.—So also the sinner must be armed at every point, well harnessed for the way, else he will have hard work to get along.

He must be surrounded by the darkness of ignorance; his mind must be blind to all spiritual objects; ignorant of God, Christ, and the plan of salvation; ignorant of the extent and purity of the divine law. And, thus prepared, you may sustain a heavy attack; you may sport with the terrors of a God, and, Leviathan-like, laugh at the shaking of Jehovah's spear. You should have also a conscience seared as it were with an hot iron; then you may ward off the heaviest blows of God's Word and Spirit. You must also have a hard heart—a heart that will bid defiance to God himself, that will refuse to tremble at all his threatenings, terrors, and tremendous curses—a heart that will remain senseless as a rock under all the dreadful thunders of his wrath, as unfeeling as the nether mill-stone to all the calls and entreaties of a dying Saviour; cherish the utmost enmity to God; be ashamed of the religion of Jesus Christ; never be found praying a tear.

In performing this journey, it is necessary that you should provide yourself with provisions. Store your minds with strong prejudices against the life and power of religion. Supply yourself with excuses for sin; such as these: This sin and the other are small sins. This thing is no harm. Surely there is nothing sinful in a genteel dance, no harm in taking a drink of grog, if a man pays for it himself, and does not make a beast of himself. If you curse and swear, excuse yourself because you were angry and insulted, and since you don't profess religion, it makes no odds.

Always have at hand a good store of the faults and blunders, the coldness and carnality of Christians. All these will serve to ease your conscience and make your way to hell more easy.

But we will give you some more particular directions.

Live as prayerless as a beast. If you feel any impressions to pray, resist them; use every excuse to avoid prayer, and to silence conscience; make a jest of it, laugh at it, and make fun of all those who perform this duty. Go to every frolic, frequent vain company, sing, fiddle and dance, and obtain for yourselves all the devil, the world, and sin can give you. Get drunk, boast that you are a clever fellow, curse and swear, and be as profane as your hellish nature will admit of, and there is no danger that you will fail of attaining to destruction. Give a loose rein to mirth and jesting; ridicule divine and eternal things; and if you find it necessary to raise the laugh, tell a few ingenious lies.—Use every effort to acquire riches, upon any terms. In horse swapping, land-jobbing, and all other kinds of trade, take every advantage in your power; deviate from the truth; extol any property you may wish to sell fifty times beyond its value; tell what extravagant prices you have been offered for it, by such and such respectable and intelligent men, and never miss a good

bargain for want of a solid, substantial lie. When you meet a poor man in distress, who is simple and ignorant, cheat him; and if conscience checks you, remember your bundle of excuses for sin. This man had the making of one-half of the bargain; his eyes were open, and he would have cheated me if he had been as smart a fellow; and now-a-days it is every man for himself. Such reasoning as this will ease the qualms of conscience, and give you essential assistance in the road to hell. Indulge in pride and vanity; look down with disdain upon all around you; treat all as your inferiors, and esteem yourself some great and good body; leave religion to the vulgar—your mind is too noble to be taken up with such trivial matters. Indulge anger, malice, and revenge, upon all occasions. Be cross and contrary as possible; delight to keep up disturbance in your neighborhood; make your family unhappy. If you receive the smallest affront, resent it—rage like a devil, curse and blaspheme, seize the fellow by the throat and knock him down. Cherish all manner of deceit; make every man believe you love and respect him, when in his company; but when behind his back, laugh at his weaknesses, expose his faults, and tell a thousand lies to exaggerate them; backbite him, and endeavor secretly to ruin his character; and if he be without fault, throw out some dark, suspicious hints, that they may make men suppose that you have found him guilty of some horrible act of wickedness; when in his company, make every profession of friendship towards him, until you have possessed yourself of all his mind, and slyly let his secrets out into the world; and when he places full confidence in you, and suffers you to get his property into your power, swindle him out of his whole fortune. But, to curse and blaspheme the name of God, is, of all exercises on the broad road, the most rational that the sinner can be engaged in. This declaration may surprise you. Can it be rational to blaspheme God's holy name? If you intended to remove to a strange country, it would be very proper to learn the language of its inhabitants; and so, as you intend to spend an eternity in hell, it is fit and necessary that you should learn the dialect of the damned; for there is nothing so like the disposition of the devil, that betrays so much of the temper of the fiends of the infernal pit, as this. In a word, if you intend to choose the broad road to hell, live in sin, commit it with greediness, go into all manner of evil, follow every imagination of your wicked heart, despise reproof, stifle your convictions, murder conscience, resist every motion of God's Holy Spirit, made through the red tide of a Redeemer's blood, and press onward, regardless of God or man.

II. Point out some of the difficulties of the way, and show how they may be overcome.

The way to hell is, indeed, difficult; for, as the Christian is scarcely saved, and that through great tribulation and hardships, so the sinner is damned through much trouble; he works out his damnation with fear and trembling. The difficulty of the way might be demonstrated by a variety of examples; but one is sufficient—that of the drunkard. He has, indeed, a painful task of it to get to hell. He must part with the peace and happiness of his family, and live at variance with the companion of his bosom. He must forfeit respectability of character, his dignity and importance in society, and sink into contempt. He must try his health, destroy his constitution, and bring upon himself malignant diseases; he must expose himself to horrid accidents—even to death itself—by falling from his horse, lying out all night in the inclemency of the weather, liable to be frozen, or torn to pieces by wild beasts. Add to these, the bitter reflections of his own mind when sober. What an awful sense of shame and disgrace seizes his mind—conscience, with all its horrors, distracts his soul, and dark forebodings of hell thrust themselves upon him.

But let us point out some of the difficulties of the broad road which impede the progress of the sinner, and show you how to overcome them.

1st. The light of conscience is an intolerable obstacle, and often gives the traveller on this road hard work. It mars his peace, deprives him of the satisfaction which he would experience in his sinful amusements. To get quit of this troublesome difficulty, whenever it makes you uneasy, fly to the bottle, and drown it with whiskey; or go to the tavern or still-house; drink till you are intoxicated: and when you come to your senses, if conscience again torments you, try the same remedy, and often repeat it, and you will effectually drown conscience. Another method to overcome the light of conscience is, to gather all the blunders and faults of professors of religion; collect the crimes of all the rotten-hearted hypocrites, and if there are a few Christians of pious and blameless conduct, believe that they are fools, fanatics, or enthusiasts; and, when you have put all these things together, persuade yourself that there is no reality in religion. Go into every kind of vain company, and laugh, jest, and endeavor to sing away every serious thought; but, if possible, get up a frolic and dance; for this is the most likely means by which to lull conscience to sleep. But of all others, the most effectual way to stifle conscience is, to oppose it; do all those things which it forbids; when it stares you in the face, and tells you any thing is wicked, go and do that very thing; if it dictates to pray or perform any other duty, be sure to neglect and refuse to do it. Conscience thus repulsed a few times, will leave you to sleep until you are waked by the torments of hell.

2d. Another difficulty is the effect of the Gospel, which you hear again and again. When in the day of his power the Lord pours out his Spirit, when you see the omnipotence of Jehovah displayed in the conviction and conversion of your parents or children, your neighbors or friends—this will torment you, and give you trouble by the way. But I will tell you how you may get over this. When you go to meeting, sit at the outside of the assembly; go off as often as possible; in the meantime, whisper, laugh a little; when a stir begins, stay among the wicked, or go out of the house, walk about, ridicule the exercises of the Christians; and if one come to talk to you, tell him you don't believe it is right; that it is hypocrisy, the devil's work; that people could help it if they would; that it is only women and ignorant people that keep such an ado; that such a praying, exhorting, and hallooing, only scares folks and raises their passions above their reason. Should conviction begin to seize you, and your conscience torment you, then run for life, clear out as fast as you can. If you should be so much affected as to shed tears and fall down, strait go to your wicked companions, and tell them of it; laugh with all your might; tell them that the screaming, hallooing people had like to have had you down; tell them how such a one fell, and rolled, and tumbled—how another yelled and screamed; and, to help the business, be sure to tell a number of lies. But, to avoid such difficulties, is, to keep away from all preaching, praying, and religious meetings; sleep every Sabbath away at home, or spend it in strolling about from place to place among the wicked.

3d. In your way to hell, stands a solid column of praying Christians. Through this opposition force your way. When you come in contact with them, look as hardened as a beast; let your countenance indicate contempt and disdain. If this will not do, raise a dispute with them; grow angry, insult them, and give them all the abuseful language imaginable. By doing so, they will be discouraged by your hardness of heart, and will conclude that your day of grace is past, and let you alone.

4th. The Eternal Spirit of God will oppose you in your way to hell; his powerful calls upon your consciences, his strivings with your hearts, and earnest entreaties and expostulations, will make it troublesome to get along. But if you will be relieved of this visitant, oppose him with all your power; put off repentance to some future period; resist all his operations, and, at length, he will leave you; for he draws rationally and powerfully. This Almighty Agent will not force you to heaven; but, if he still hangs about your conscience, disobey all his warnings, refuse to give heed to all his invitations. Enter more deeply into sin; be much more wicked than you have been, and he will leave you in ease to indulge in folly and iniquity, that you

may become a fit subject for the wrath and fiery vengeance of Jehovah.

5th. The gracious, compassionate Jesus will oppose your course in the broad road. And here is the hardest task. You must trample under foot his bruised and mangled body, and wade through the red sea of his divine blood; you must set your face, like adamant, toward hell, determined to force your way down to destruction, in despite of all opposition.

III. Make some observations upon the end of the way. The end of the broad road is death: "*The wages of sin is death.*"—Here, poor sinner, you will at once come to your senses, and reflect like a rational creature. Now, awful consternation, keen horror, and a fearful looking-for of judgment will tear your soul with bitter agony.

My thoughts on awful subjects roll,
 Damnation and the dead;
 What horrors seize a guilty soul
 Upon a dying bed!

And now, sinner, you must part with all your mirth. Your vain jests and merry songs, your entertainments, your balls, frolics and dances, are eternally over. Conscience awakes like a giant refreshed with wine, and gnaws like a greedy vulture.—All the sins of your past life stare you in the face, the guilt of all your slighted opportunities, the convictions you have murdered, the offers of mercy you have despised. The abused blood of the Son of God, now form the foretaste of hell—the forebodings of damnation.

But when the fatal moment comes, when body and soul must part—Oh, dismal thought!—the flaming fiends appear, a solid column of devils fill the room, they approach to the bedside like raging lions, they seize your departing soul—what will your feelings then be? As it is said of the glorified saints in heaven, "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*" The heart of man cannot conceive of the inexpressible torments of the damned in hell.

The next thing after the end of the way is, hell—the sinner's own place, his final abode, his everlasting home—in Scripture called, "*The bottomless pit—the burning lake*"—"*The lake that burns with fire and brimstone*"—"*Tophet, ordained of old, the pile whereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of fire and brimstone, doth kindle it*"—*The second death*—"*The blackness of darkness—The wrath to come—the vengeance of eternal fire—Everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*"

In this gloomy region, your company, sinner, will be, the horrible fiends of hell, together with all the accursed spirits, forev-

er banished from the peaceful presence of the Lord, all the damned ghosts that ever have, or shall, sink down to eternal death: yea, all the rubbish and off-scouring, the filth and refuse of the moral world, which a holy God deems unfit for any other place.

Were you shut up alone one night in a dark room with the devil, how dreadful would you feel! But, then, you will be with him forever more. In hell, you will feel all the punishment of loss—loss of heaven, loss of God and Christ, hope, and all possibility of mercy. You shall feel, too, the punishment of sense. The eternal, uninterrupted communications of Jehovah's pure, unmixed wrath, will forever prey upon the soul, inflicting keener pain and torture than Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, seven times heated, could inflict upon a natural body. While the one hand of enraged Omnipotence supports the sinner in being, and enlarges his capacity for suffering, with the other he tortures him with all the miseries and pains which infinite wisdom can invent, or Almighty Power inflict. Oh, how dreadful must be the torments of HELL!

SERMON XVI.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY PIETY.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.—ECCLESIASTES, xii. 1.

My YOUNG FRIENDS:

I may address you with propriety in the language of Ehud, the Jewish commander, to Eglon, king of Moab, "*I have a message from God unto thee.*" Things of everlasting importance demand your attention.

The high and lofty One who inhabits Eternity, who spake worlds and systems of worlds into being, who orders the rising and setting of the sun, who counts the stars, and claims the universe as his own, addresses himself to you to-day, and commands you particularly to remember your Creator in the days of your youth.

Dare you refuse your attention? You are his creatures; he called you from nothing into being, gave you an existence which shall outlive the wreck of worlds, which shall endure when suns shall rise and set no more.

Look back one century, and tell me where were you then, and where ten thousand ages previous. You existed no where; no such beings were known throughout Jehovah's vast dominions. And where will you be one hundred years from this time? Gone forever from this globe—swallowed up in boundless eternity. You will be walking the golden streets of the Heavenly Jerusalem, joining the songs of adoring angels, the shouts and hallelujahs of the blood-bought millions; or you will be roaring in the dark regions of hell, shrieking and yelling with the devils and despairing fiends. Oh, my young friends, how precious are your souls!—how important those things big with your everlasting fate! As, says the celebrated Davies, each one of you is

An embryo angel, or an infant fiend,
You are beings now begun, but ne'er to end;
From glory, then, to glory you must rise,
Or sink from deep to deeper miseries,
Ascend perfection's everlasting scale,
Or still descend from gulf in hell.

In the relation in which you stand to God—as creatures to a creator—self-love and your best interests call loudly upon you to attend to the solemn and awful voice of the eternal God, *“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.”*

In these words there are two things which especially demand our attention. First, an important command: *“Remember now thy Creator.”* To forget God, in Scripture, is expressive of a life spent in sin and wickedness. Therefore, to remember God, includes the very essence of religion. It is to keep in mind the infinite obligations of love, gratitude and obedience, we are under to him as our creator, preserver and kind benefactor. It implies a particular attention to all the commands given in his word, an implicit obedience to all the precepts of the gospel—a harkening to his voice when he calls by prosperous and adverse providences, by the dictates of conscience, and the influences of his Holy Spirit.

That religion which consists in change of nature and in conformity to the likeness of God—which prepares the soul for death, judgment and eternity—is sometimes called the *fear of God*. *“Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man”*—*“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.”* Sometimes it is defined *love to God*. *“We love him because he first loved us”*—*“Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”* The sum of the first table of the divine law is, *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”* And, again, it is termed the *knowledge of God*. *“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”* St. Paul speaks of it as *holiness*. *“Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* But in our text, it is included in the idea of *remembering* our Creator.

Secondly. The command is particularly addressed to persons in your season of life: *“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.”* To remember our Creator is enjoined upon all ranks, classes and descriptions of mankind. But here more particularly upon those in the bloom and vigor of youth. The Almighty Jehovah demands, as his unquestionable right, your hearts—your whole hearts—your souls, bodies and spirits. He requires your love and obedience to all his commands.

In the farther prosecution of this subject, we shall consider—

- I. The propriety of the command.
- II. What it is to obey it.
- III. Enforce that obedience.

- I. The propriety of the command.

Then, my young friends, permit me to ask you a serious and important question. Is it not right to love good and hate evil? to choose happiness and avoid misery? to seek your temporal

and eternal interests, and shun everlasting destruction? to take God—Christ—and everlasting blessedness for your portion; and forsake sin that you may escape a dreadful hell of indescribable torment? Would it not be rational for an intelligent creature, who must spend a long eternity in heaven or hell, to make such a choice? Then, it is right also to remember your Creator in the days of your youth. He is infinitely deserving of your highest love, your strongest affection, your praise and obedience. He is the essence of being—the source of every perfection.—“*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work.*”—“*Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.*” The works of nature and the dealings of his providence proclaim his infinite wisdom, his almighty power and unbounded goodness. The apostle tells us, *that his eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen, being understood by the things which he has made.*

But it is the volume of divine revelation that the ineffable glories of God and the excellency of his attributes, shine in noon-day splendor. There he is described as the great “*I AM THAT I AM*,” the Almighty, self-existent and eternal cause of all things. The Sovereign of the Universe, by whose power worlds are upheld, and by whose wisdom they are governed.—Before him all the nations of the earth vanish into nothing.—“*Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance! Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing!*”—“*Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*” He is the holy Lord God, worshipped and adored by angels, archangels, and all his ransomed followers, who surround his lofty throne. How extraordinary his love; how boundless his goodness, which extends to all his creatures. “*God is love*”—pure, unmixed, unparalleled, unbounded love. In a word, “*The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.*” But in the plan of salvation, in the redemption of a lost world by the obedience and death of his Son, consists the most overwhelming display of the glory of God. Though his attributes shine with astonishing beauty in the works of Creation and Providence, yet no where are they exhibited with such amazing grandeur as in the face of Jesus. This was truly the greatest work of the Omnipotent.

God, in the person of his Son,
Hath all his mightiest works out done.

Stern justice, immaculate holiness, unsearchable wisdom, everlasting love, and unparalleled mercy unite in a dying Saviour, while salvation from sin and hell flows in crimson torrents from his bleeding heart.

My young friends, I have endeavored to impress you with the dignity, the glory, excellency and beauty of Him who addresses you in our text: "*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*" And does not your reason at once reply that you should remember him while in the bloom of youth; that you should love, serve, praise and adore him with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. You should yield obedience to this command, because you are his creatures. He brought you from nothing into being—made you rational creatures capable of contemplating the glory of his attributes, and enjoying everlasting happiness; he has fed, clothed, and preserved you from the earliest period of your existence; he has bestowed upon you innumerable mercies and blessings; he has supported you under the most alarming circumstances; he has snatched you from the grasp of death when all hopes of life were extinct; he pitied your ruined state—opened a door of divine mercy—gave his Son to die for you, to purchase your salvation from sin and hell; he has given you his Word—his Gospel—and the internal operations of his Holy Spirit. Then, I ask, can any thing be more reasonable than that you should *remember you Creator, even now, in the days of your youth?*

Your best *interest* calls loudly upon you to attend to this command; to hearken to the voice of his Word and Spirit, Your temporal and eternal happiness depends upon the attention you give to this earnest invitation. Your judgment teaches you the propriety of loving and serving him. All he requires of you is, to forsake sin, your worst enemy—the abominable thing which he hates, and which will render you miserable throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. He asks you only to walk in the narrow way that leadeth unto life; to escape misery and ruin, and accept of true happiness, unspeakable glory, and eternal life. Can any thing be so reasonable as these requisitions? Can any demands be more strictly in accordance with propriety and justice?

But many young people tell us that sin is an innocent thing, and there is no danger attached to it. They tell us that it is no harm to forget God; to live months and years without praying to him; to neglect the Bible, and pay no attention to its precepts; to spend the Sabbath in giddy company, with vain mirth and foolish conversation, and in romps and plays. There is no harm in the ball room, in cards, racing, or in taking a glass of grog. But remember, my friends, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.*" Reflect one moment; view sin

closely; consider its nature and tendency. It separates the soul from God, your Creator and wise preserver, the source of all happiness, and the spring of every perfection, and tends to the desecration of all order, beauty, harmony and bliss throughout the creation of God. Its consequences are anarchy and eternal death. It aims at nothing less than the annihilation of Deity, and the ruin of his vast empire. What has this monster done? It hurled angels from the throne of God to the bottomless pit of hell, and transformed them into devils—robbed Adam of the image of God, and enstamped upon his heart in livid colors, the likeness of the arch fiend of hell—converted our world, once a Paradise, into a dreary waste, bringing forth thorns, breeding disease and death. Whence originated those disorders and miseries to which mankind has so long been subjected? Whence arise cruelty, injustice and bloodshed? Whence spring oppression, contention and all possible evil? Sin has produced all these dismal effects.

Descend to the regions of the damned. View the innumerable multitudes of devils and fiend like ghosts rolling in liquid flames of fire and brimstone. Hear their dismal shrieks, their horrid groans, and despairing yells. Inquire of them why they are there—and what causes their unutterable anguish? They will answer you, in language big with infernal horror, SIN.

And now say, is it an innocent, inoffensive thing? Would you escape this abominable monster and all its dreadful consequences? Then obey the command given in the text: "*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*"

II. What it is to obey this command.

To remember the Creator, signifies solemn and serious reflection upon his character and attributes; a strict attention to his Word and the calls of his Holy Spirit. "Men," says Brown, "remember God when they think of him, believe on him, and trust him for salvation."

It also implies that we be sensible of the infinite obligations we are under to him; that we love him with all our hearts, soul, mind and strength; that we obey all the injunctions of the divine law; that we serve God with a perfect mind; that we deal justly toward all men, and that we discharge, with an eye to the glory of God, all the christian and moral duties.

We must repent of all our sins, fly to Christ, receive him by faith, and live a life of holy obedience.

But poor, unconverted sinners consider themselves a kind of free and independent beings, under no obligations to obey the commands of God. Say they, We make no pretensions to religion, therefore, we may do as we please; we may swear, get drunk and fight; we may dance, break the Sabbath and gamble, without being guilty of any crime. Alas! you err; you are

under a fatal mistake. By such conduct, you spit venom in the face of the Almighty, and set Jehovah at defiance. Have you forgotten his omnipotence? that he is the rightful Sovereign of the Universe? He gave you being; he preserves you; he has purchased you with his own blood; therefore, his right to your services—to your implicit obedience of all his commands, is unquestionable.

But whence the necessity of attending to this command *now*, *in the days of youth?* Would it not answer just as well when married and settled, or when grown old and incapable of enjoying the pleasures of this world? No, my friends. In youth the heart is tender—the operations of the Spirit are felt most powerfully; and then to take up the cross and follow Jesus, is not so difficult a task, as when you have come to manhood, and business crowds upon you; when the affairs of this life engage your whole attention; when your heart has become *hard through the deceitfulness of sin*; when your conscience has grown callous to the calls of the Spirit; when you no longer hear with interest the invitations of the gospel. In old age, men are commonly so buried in iniquity, that there is little hope of repentance.

III. Enforce obedience to the command.

To remember your Creator, is an all important matter, and upon your obedience to the divine injunction depends your soul's salvation from everlasting torment in the flames of hell.

By God you were created. He made you intelligent and reasonable, capable of enjoying happiness in time and throughout eternity. His goodness unto you has been manifested by his continual preservation of you. When in helpless infancy he provided you a protector, he watched over you for good, though perhaps deprived of all earthly friends, all comfort from those around, his Spirit has visited and comforted you.

By transgression of the law all mankind were involved in misery and sin. They rebelled against their righteous Lord; refused to serve him; yielded themselves willing subjects to the dominion of his enemy, the Devil; wrought his will and did all his pleasure. But the Lord, notwithstanding the wickedness of man, though his thoughts were evil and that continually, did not forget the workmanship of his hands. He pitied our world, and devised means whereby he might retrieve man from his lost estate. Salvation was purchased by the humiliation of his Son. Though Lord of Glory, such was his love to man, that he became flesh and dwelt among us; made himself a servant; was reviled, persecuted and rejected of those whose salvation he came to effect. Yea, he suffered himself to be scourged, mocked and treated with all manner of indignities, and, at length, he was nailed to the cross, pierced with wounds, and expired in inutter-

able agony. Has he done all this? and will you not remember your Creator? Will you not devote to him the strength and vigor of your youth?

But, my young friends, this is not all. You feast daily upon his bounty; you wallow in the fatness of his creatures; you live in the enjoyment of all the means of grace; you have his word; you have been taught to peruse it, and follow its precepts; you hear his gospel; you have warnings of your danger without number; you are blessed with health, and, indeed, with all that heart could wish. But yet you forget God; continue in disobedience to his commandments; roll sin, like a sweet morsel, under your tongues; and postpone your reformation till a more advanced period of life. Know you not that it is declared in his word, "*Now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.*"

Youth is the time of life which seems to be particularly favored by the Almighty. Many are the promises that he has made to young persons. "*They that seek me early shall find me*"—"I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant." Has God thus particularly regarded you? Has he offered you so many inducements? Has he done so much for you? Has he manifested so great an interest in your welfare? Has he bestowed so many inestimable blessings upon you? Has he blessed you with a goodly inheritance in this highly favored land, where you live protected by wholesome laws, in the full enjoyment of the rights of man? Then will you not, in token of gratitude for these manifold favors, be induced to "*Remember your Creator in the days of your youth?*"

Consider that, while you are thus blessed, millions on the earth are oppressed, subjected to the tyranny of capricious monarchs; while you enjoy the sunshine of the gospel, and have the Will of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe made known unto you—so many of the nations of the earth are blinded by the thick mists of ignorance, and know not God. When you violate the divine commandments, mark how the monitor within your breast reproves you. Tutored by the precepts of God, your conscience warns you of your danger. But the poor heathen goes headlong in the dark, impenetrable gloom, with naught to guide him but the dim light of nature. And now, my friends, can you, after all that God has done for you, still continue in rebellion against him? Will you put him from you? Will you despise his warnings? Will you resist his calls?—Will you forget him? Or, will you not rather remember your Creator? Confide in your Redeemer; repent speedily of your sins; reform your lives, and walk in all the commands of God blameless; "*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth;*"

defer it not; put not off the time of your return to your duty; delay not, I charge you, when God says, "Now." Dare you thus treat the Omnipotent, whose vengeance is swift to pursue those who mock him? Beware, lest you harden your hearts; lest you provoke the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit. "*My Spirit*," says God, "*shall not always strive with man*"—"Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." Be wise, and act decisively in this important matter; your happiness in life and throughout eternity depends upon your conduct? Do not rashly postpone your decision; make the prudent and judicious choice. If you disregard these things; if you refuse Christ, and reject the invitations of the Lord, he will surely punish you. In time, you shall suffer misery, and throughout eternity you must bear the unmixed wrath of God; you shall enjoy no peace; horror and the dread of punishment shall torment you: life shall afford you no solid comfort, and death shall come upon you unexpectedly, and find you unprepared to stand before the Judge of all the Earth.

Remember, that the sinner, who believeth not in Christ, shall be damned. "*He that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*" The hottest hell, the heaviest damnation awaits the gospel-slighter, who tramples under foot the blood of the Son of God, who rejects the overtures of mercy.

Do you feel prepared to die—to leave this world and go to an unknown region beyond the grave? Do you feel that bliss eternal would be yours were you called hence? Or, rather, are there not apprehensions of danger—forebodings of destruction? Would you escape the fear of death—would you fly from ruin and death—would you shun the wrath of an offended God? Obey the command; "*Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth.*"

Promise not yourselves long life: think not that you will attain to great age, and that you have plenty of time, and it is not worth while to be in a hurry about this matter. But, friends, life is short and very uncertain. In a moment, when you suspect no harm, death will come upon you. Beware, lest *this night thy souls be required of you.* Boast not, yourselves, of to-morrow, for you know not what a day may bring forth. Now is the accepted time—delay is dangerous. "*Procrastination is the thief of time.*" Before you are again called upon to give this all important matter your serious and solemn attention, death may come upon you. Then, alas! it will be too late for repentance—your soul will be hurried into eternity, and be enveloped forever in the flames of hell; then will the storm of Jehovah's vengeance beat upon your naked soul; then will you know the pains and miseries of eternal pun-

ishment; and you will lament, in bitter anguish, your neglect of the invitations of mercy. But would you escape the groans of the damned, the unutterable torments of hell, "*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*"

Young people fancy, that when they obtain religion, they enter upon a miserable existence; that they would be ruined and lost. What a sad mistake! There is no happiness, no pleasure, no satisfaction, to be found any where but in the religion of Jesus. Dear young friends, remember your Creator in the days of your youth; then you will declare there is no happiness to be compared to a view of the glory of God in the face of Jesus; then you will feel a Saviour's love shed abroad in your hearts; you shall enjoy the dawn of heaven, the first fruits of the blessedness of the celestial Paradise. Here you shall feed upon peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost. And when death shall unloose the heavy shackles of the body and liberate the soul, you shall fly home to glory; you shall receive the inheritance prepared for you from the foundation of the world; you shall dwell in the presence of your heavenly Father; sorrow shall forever flee from you, and all tears shall be wiped from your eyes; you shall enjoy perfect and unalloyed bliss throughout the never ending ages of Eternity.

S E R M O N X V I I .

CHRIST HAS DONE ALL THINGS WELL.

And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well.—MARK vii. 37.

In this chapter, we have an account of two miracles performed by our Lord Jesus Christ. The most remarkable of which, the perfect cure of a deaf and dumb man, demands our particular attention.

“And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue.”—From which we may learn that the Lord condescends to use means in healing the diseases of the soul. Although in working this miracle there is clearly no natural connection between the means used and the end to be produced, yet this is the ordinary method by which he works; and, therefore, in obedience to the divine command, we must wait for his blessing in the use of means. In fasting and prayer there is nothing which can convert the soul, or engage the favor of God, any more than spitting and touching the tongue of the dumb could remove the impediment without the exercise of Almighty Power.

After having performed this miracle, Jesus gave his followers convincing proof of his humility and lowliness of mind.—Though he had wrought a work which proved him to be God, yet, so far from wishing his fame to be sounded abroad, “he charged them that they should tell no man.” But they could not conceal what had been done. Wherever the healing grace of God is felt, the tongue is loose to proclaim the wonders of redeeming love—to tell others what the Lord has done for their souls. On this occasion, so filled were their souls with a sense of the love and goodness of Jesus, that they published him abroad; and this is always the effect of a revelation of the divine glory to the soul.

Christ no sooner discoveres himself to Andrew, than he runs to his brother Simon with this joyful news: "*We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.*" No sooner does Christ say unto Phillip, "*Follow me,*" than he "*findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, we have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the Prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth.*" When he manifests himself to the two disciples, going from Emmaus, in the breaking of bread, immediately they rise and return in haste to Jerusalem, that they may carry the glad tidings to their brethren. Why is it that converted sinners must talk of Christ, like David, tell those who love the Lord, what he has done for their souls? Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. They have such clear views of his personal glory; they see such an excellency and beauty in the whole plan of redemption; they are so full of the love of God, that they are "*astonished beyond measure,*" and cry, "*He hath done all things well.*"

In the illustration of this subject, we shall--

Show that Christ hath done all things well.

And here we shall consider what it is that determines the quality of the act of a moral agent. To be right, every action must be exactly agreeable to the will of God. As Jesus was essentially holy and good, all his actions must have been pure and undefiled. It was his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father.

The motive to every action must be just. Every act of God himself, and, indeed, of all holy beings, originates in the same design. God acts from a supreme love to himself, and since he is the essence of all perfection and excellence, in all his conduct he only designs the advancement of his own infinite glory.

All holy beings act from a principle of supreme love to God, and consequently desire the advancement of his glory. In this respect, all the mediatorial conduct of Jesus was right. The law of God was his delight. "*Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God: yea, thy law is within my heart.*" All his actions proceeded from pure love to God, and were designed to glorify the divine perfections. A proof of the fact we have in the context and in many others. He performs miracles which demonstrate the divinity and glory of his person: and such is his hunility and self-denial, that he charges the witnesses of his works to tell no man. When the people would have taken him by force and made him King, he escapes from them privately and hides himself; and, for this reason, his kingdom was not of this world, but spiritual; he sought not his own glory, but the infinite glory of God.

All good actions tend to manifest the perfections of the Deity. In this respect, the blessed Jesus did all things well. In the redemption of man, the divine glory shines with unrivalled splendor. The works of Providence declare the being and power of God; but his goodness and wisdom are most gloriously displayed in the salvation of lost and ruined man.

But we will come more closely to the subject, and show in a few particulars that Jesus hath done all things well. In the creation of the world he did all things well. In this great event, the wisdom, power and goodness of God, are clearly exhibited. He brings into being various ranks of intelligent creatures, capable of knowing and enjoying him. He upholds them and provides for their comfort and support; and he also gives them a holy law for their direction and government, which, in all respects, shows forth the holiness and justice, the dignity and sovereignty of the great Creator.

But we designed to observe the divine conduct in the plan of redemption most particularly—and here we shall begin.

1st. With his gracious interposition in the covenant of redemption, infinite ages before the existence of the world—when he undertook to pay the price of sinners' ransom and glorify the divine attributes in their complete and eternal salvation. From all eternity, Jehovah beheld the family of Adam in the ruins of their fallen state, weltering in their blood and gore, exposed, in the open field of depravity, to the wrath of God and the torments of hell. And here, for once, the attributes of the Deity seem to clash. Infinite love and mercy plead for the sinner's deliverance. Holiness, truth and justice demand full satisfaction for every sin, and cry for the blood of the guilty; and they will not be appeased, unless a plan is devised by which the law may be magnified and made honorable, and the sovereignty of the lawgiver vindicated. All the perfections of God must be reconciled and glorified in the redemption of lost sinners. But in what manner this could be affected, none but Jehovah could decide. All the wisdom of the shining hosts above combined could not have formed a plan adequate to the grand design, nor was their love for man and their compassion for his sufferings sufficient for so great an undertaking: for, surely, they would not voluntarily submit to endure the infinite wrath of an angry God due to the sins of the whole elect world. But omnipotent power and almighty strength were necessary to bear the weight of divine vengeance, which would have sunk all the angels and archangels in glory down to eternal darkness and despair. Therefore, none but a divine person, infinite in love and of almighty power, was adequate to the task. Help is laid upon one that is mighty to save. “*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever*

believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—Jesus, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the image of his person, takes upon him to stand surety and substitute for the sinner, engages to assume our nature, to pay man's ransom with his own precious blood, and satisfy every claim of divine justice. Now, O, believer, you have felt the pardon of sin; the blood of Jesus has been savingly applied to your soul. Look back on the early counsels of eternity; view the stability of the everlasting covenant of peace; behold the beauty and sufficiency of the great plan of salvation; and will not your heart, filled with wonder and astonishment, cry out, “*He hath done all things well.*”

2dly. It will appear that Christ “*hath done all things well,*” if we consider the glorious, everlasting righteousness which he has wrought out for sinners, by his active and passive obedience. Mankind, standing in the relation of creatures to God, their Creator and Lawgiver, were bound to render unto him the most perfect obedience—to submit implicitly to all the laws of the divine government, and, as fallen sinners, they should have suffered the just penalty incurred by the infraction of the divine law. But, as man is dead in trespasses and in sin, he is utterly disqualified to render perfect obedience, or to free himself from the penalty of the law; for, as sin is an infinite evil, and, consequently, merits infinite punishment, it follows that finite beings could not satisfy justice otherwise than by suffering infinite and eternal punishment. Therefore, not one of Adam's race could have been saved, unless a perfect, law-fulfilling righteousness was provided, including an obedience commensurate with the demands of God's holy law, and a complete atonement for every sin. Such a righteousness the Lord Jesus Christ has wrought out; for though he was, from all eternity, “*in the form of God,*” and “*thought it not robbery to be equal with God,*” yet he “*made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*” Yea, he hath procured a righteousness equal to the claims of the law; in which the attributes of Deity are glorified; with which God the Father is well pleased; through which he can be just, and save the ungodly sinner who believes on Jesus; and as it has stood the inspection of inflexible justice, and has received Jehovah's eternal approbation, upon it the sinner may venture his salvation, and be justified in the sight of a holy God.

When the believer reflects upon this atoning righteousness, its glory and suitableness, and perceives his salvation through

it, firm and secure as the pillars of heaven, his soul leaps for joy, and, with wonder and astonishment, he proclaims that Jesus “*hath done all things well.*”

3dly. Christ does all things well, when he makes the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak. When by his Word and Spirit he reaches the hardened heart of the sinner; when he awakens him out of the dead sleep of sin and carnal security; drives him from all his refuges of lies; strips him of his own righteousness, and finally shuts him up to the necessity of believing;—when he strikes off the iron bolts of unbelief, opens the heart, and reveals his ineffable glory to the soul, whereby he wins the affections, and bows the will in sweet subjection to his law and government; and when the believing sinner feels the blood of Jesus applied to his conscience, communicating a sense of pardon, attended with peace unspeakable; when he has within his breast the witness of the Spirit, and reads his title to a heavenly inheritance—then, indeed, is he astonished beyond measure, saying, “*He hath done all things well.*” The whole plan of salvation appears so excellent, so worthy of a God, and yet so suitable to his condition, that he prefers it above any other possible plan, and rejoices to be nothing, that Christ may be all in all.

The Divine Mediator displays the power and glory of his grace in conversion, by changing the temper and disposition of the heart. Alexander, Cæsar and Marlborough conquered nations and forced thousands into obedience; but they could not subdue the will; firm and untrammelled, she reigned the unrivalled queen of the soul. But the proudest sinners, the most stubborn rebels, who are overcome by the power and grace of the Redeemer, are sweetly drawn by their own free and hearty consent. No sooner do they obtain a saving view of Christ, than they leave all and follow him. Those who are represented in Scripture as Serpents, become as innocent as the lamb and as harmless as the dove; and that infernal disposition of the Devil, which possessed the soul is rooted out, and a holy principle implanted, which works by love, and purifies the heart, and overcomes the world.

4thly. That he hath done all things well, is manifested in the trials, difficulties and afflictions of the children of God, who are very apt to prescribe for the Lord, to lay out for themselves an easy, pleasant passage to the kingdom of heaven. But infinite wisdom knows what is best calculated to prepare them for their inheritance. Therefore, when tribulations are sent, they are designed to refine and fit them to become vessels of mercy for that “*house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*” By this means, their affections are weaned from the world; they are convinced more and more of the emptiness of all earthly enjoy-

ments; they are led to seek a better country, and their hearts incline to submit to the sovereignty of God and acquiesce in his will. Although, for the present, all things appear dark and gloomy as midnight, and they cannot comprehend the mysterious conduct of Jehovah, whose ways are in the deep and whose paths are in the mighty waters; yet when the designs of infinite wisdom are accomplished, the event ever proves that "*He hath done all things well;*" that in all his conduct towards them he consulted their true interest.

So Jacob, when his beloved son Joseph is snatched from him and sold into a foreign country, very readily believes him to be dead, denies himself all comfort, and declares "*I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.*" Yet when the deep mystery of Providence is unraveled by Joseph's promotion to honor in Egypt; when, as governor of the land, he saves his father's household from the miseries of famine, Jacob acknowledges that his God had done all things well.

In like manner the beloved disciples of Christ, when their Lord was crucified and laid in the grave, not rightly understanding the deep designs of Omnipotence, were much distressed by this dispensation. "*We trusted,*" said they, "*that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.*" But when he meets with them after his resurrection, and opens their understandings by explaining the spiritual meaning of the scriptures, then, with astonishment, they see that Jesus *hath done all things well.*

To this we may add—That the hiding of God's reconciled countenance from his people, their painful struggle with the inbred corruption of the heart, together with the many dreadful attacks of their arch enemy, the Devil, are so overruled by the divine wisdom and goodness, as to result in the eternal welfare of their souls. By these means, the pride of their heart is subdued their legality and self-confidence destroyed, their souls are brought to rely continually by faith upon Christ, and they experience the fulfilment of the promise "*That all things shall work together for good to them that love God.*" The light afflictions of the people of God in this world, which are but for a moment, work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Lastly. In the general judgment, when Christ shall come in clouds, arrayed in all the pomp and grandeur of the Deity, to judge the quick and dead, it shall appear to all rational intelligences, that "*He hath done all things well.*" The heaven, earth and hell, shall witness the justice of his conduct in dooming the ungodly to eternal damnation. Then every sin of thought and deed, with every conviction they have slighted, every motion of God's Spirit they have quenched, and every offer of mercy they have rejected, shall be exposed to the view of an assembled universe. And angels, men and devils, when the Eternal pro-

nounces the dreadful and irrevocable sentence, “*Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire,*” shall testify that “*He hath done all things well.*” On the other hand, the equity and justice of God shall appear in the justification of the elect world. Then the followers of Jesus, the dear-bought travail of his soul, who cost him the groans and bloody sweat of Gethsemane, the dying agonies of Calvary, shall be clad with a robe of righteousness.—When the law and justice present their claims and demand satisfaction, the Redeemer shall produce his atoning, law-fulfilling righteousness which covers the law of God, and shall vindicate the divine glory in the redemption of man. Then all the revilings and reproaches, and false charges, of the wicked, shall be wiped away, whilst Christ, their beloved friend and elder brother, will ascend to heaven with the ransomed, who shall proclaim throughout Eternity, “*He hath done all things well.*”

SERMON XVIII.

A SACRAMENTAL MEDITATION.

How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this the gate of heaven.—GENESIS, xxviii. 17.

In this chapter we have an account of a remarkable event in the history of the patriarch Jacob, when, after having obtained the blessing, he fled from the rage of his brother Esau. From the first ages of the world to the present day, the seed of the serpent has persecuted the seed of the woman. The patriarch, driven from his father's house, deprived of the presence of his affectionate parents, was compelled to seek refuge in a foreign land, while upon his journey he is overtaken by the night, destitute of a house to shelter him from the weather, and his bed the cold ground, his pillow a stone, and his covering the starry skies. But when the children of God are in the most forlorn situation, destitute of a home, and deprived of the society of their dearest friends, they often experience sweet comforts, of which the unconverted are ignorant, and, although they may be stripped of all earthly possessions, yet nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus, for his promise is, “*He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee*”—“*When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*” When Jacob, far removed from the haunts of men, lay on the cold ground, God was pleased to bless him with a visit, and, in a vision of the night, he saw heaven opened: “*And behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it; and, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land wherein thou liest, to the will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south,*

and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." When the humble believer views the glory of God as it shines in the face of Christ, he sinks into the dust with shame and self-loathing, and his language is, "*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore, I abhor myself in dust and ashes.*" "*How dreadful is this place!—this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*"

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in the context is the similitude of the ladder, which, according to the opinions of the most approved divines, was a representation of the incarnation of the Son of God, or of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Emanuel; and this agrees with the declaration of our Lord himself, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter, ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.*" The ladder reached from heaven to the earth, and opened a communication from the one to the other. So, by the incarnation of the Son God, time and eternity are joined together; the omnipotence of God and the weakness of man are united in one; and, thereby, a door is opened to lost sinners in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the medium of communion between God and man. God addressed Jacob in words of peace from the top of the ladder; and God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, through whom he offers guilty sinners pardon and eternal life. When Jacob awoke from sleep, he had lively impressions of this glorious vision; and, no doubt, his soul was sweetly agitated with a sense of the love and goodness of God; and, at the same time, he had clear views of his own unworthiness; and the thought of what he had seen and felt, fills his mind with fear and awe: "*And he said, surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not; and he was afraid, and said, how dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*"

Every place where God and the believing soul hold communion, is solemn and dreadful; but as the sacrament of the supper is one of the most affecting institutions of heaven, and one of the nearest approaches to God that can be made on this side of eternity, and in which believers are permitted to hold intimate conversation with our blessed Jesus, we will particularly accommodate the subject to that occasion; and when we behold the table of Christ spread and the memorials of his broken body and shed blood upon it, with propriety we may adopt the language of the text: "*How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is gate of heaven.*"

In further attending to this subject, we will consider the different particulars in the text.

1st. A sacramental table is a dreadful place; for God is there.

When the angel of the covenant appeared to Moses in a flame of fire, in the midst of the bush, God commanded him, with reverence to stand at a distance, saying, "*Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.* *And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.*" When on mount Sinai, in the dreadful glories of his Godhead, he appeared to the children of Israel, "*with thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud, and a voice of a trumpet exceedingly lound, so that all the people trembled,*" how dreadful was that place! Bounds were set, and the people had to stay at a distance; none dared to come forward to gaze or give an unhallowed touch to the mount, on the pain of being thrust through with a dart.

When the Judge of all shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; when he shall be seated on the great white throne of his glory, and all the inhabitants of earth and hell are arraigned at his bar, how dreadful will that place be! Well, God is as really present at a sacramental table as he was in the burning bush at Horeb, or on Mount Sinai, or as he will be at the judgment of the great day. Then, as Moses did at the burning bush, turn aside and see this great sight, here you may behold all the perfections of God shining with amiable brightness in the face of Jesus Christ; here you may view the infinite love of God towards our guilty race finding vent through the breaking heart and bleeding veins of the dying Jesus, and flowing to the chief of sinners. Here you may see mercy and truth meeting each other, righteousness and peace kissing each other in the salvation of guilty sinners of Adam's race.

2nd. A sacramental table is a dreadful place, because it is a striking exhibition of the most important transaction ever witnessed by men or angels, viz. the redemption of guilty sinners by the bitter agonies, bloody sufferings, and dying groans of the incarnate God. Here you may see the Everlasting God, in the likeness of sinful flesh; the ancient of days become an infant of days; the Eternal God who sways the scepter of the universe, born in a stable and laid in a manger; here you may see God who is the source of all consolation, become *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*; here you may see the adorable Being, to whom angels and archangels are indebted for their existence, *despised and rejected of men*; here you may see Emanuel, God in our nature, standing in our place, and receiving the stroke of justice in his own person, which was due to the guilty sinner. View him in the garden of Gethsemane, sweating blood, in an agony; see him prostrate on the cold ground, pressed beneath the load of our guilt; the wrath of God falling upon him until he sweats as it were *great drops of blood falling up-*

on the ground; hear him crying in extreme agony, “Now is my soul troubled.”—“*My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death;*” listen to that heart rending prayer, “*Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*” See him betrayed by one of his disciples—denied by another, and forsaken by all; seized by a band of soldiers; bound like a thief, and dragged before the bar of a mortal worm. Although innocent, yet he is condemned. See him buffeted; spat upon; scourged with knotty whips, till one might tell all his bones; his lovely face black with blows; his tender temples pierced with thorns; see them array him in an old purple robe—a crown of thorns upon his head, and a reed in his hand—while the insolent rabble bow before him, and, in derision, cry, Hail, King of the Jews;—see him carrying his heavy cross through the streets of Jerusalem, both at the gates of the city and up Mount Calvary to the place of execution.—Now see him stretched on the cross, nailed to the fatal wood by the tender hands and feet; see him raised upon the accursed cross, suspended between the earth and heavens, a spectacle for angels, men and devils; he is denied the privilege of common malefactors, who were executed with their faces towards the temple; but he is placed with his back towards it, and his face towards the west. But here the rage of men and devils defeats their own designs; for while his back is turned towards the the temple, his face looks far away to the western world—even to these ends of the earth—and he casts a look of pity towards many millions of lost sinners weltering in their blood in these dark regions of the shadow of death, and a gleam of joy fills his breaking heart, when upon the cross he looks even towards Gasper River;* see him struggling in the agonies of death; the sins of all the Elect world, both before and after conversion, fixing upon him like so many deadly vipers; the poisoned arrows of the wrath of God, striking fast in his heart, and the burning beams of Jehovah’s indignation against sin, falling upon him: listen to his bitter outcry when his father withdrew from him the light of his countenance: “*Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani,—My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” see the soldier’s spear pierces his side, and reaches his heart: but the flaming sword of God’s justice pierces both body and soul. Now, see a rich fountain of divine blood flowing in scarlet streams from his bleeding veins, until every drop is spilt; behold him sinking in the agonies of death, and, crying with a loud voice It is FINISHED; he gives up the ghost, and becomes a pallid, lifeless corpse. O, believer, look into his pierced side, and view his broken heart, the fountain of life, from which precious streams of love and mercy flow to guilty sinners.

*This Sermon was preached at Gasper Meeting-House.

3rd. A sacramental table is a dreadful place: for the Holy One of Israel here confers and sups with pardoned rebels; and how must the inhabitants of heaven be astonished to see the omnipotent Jehovah seated at his table and holding communion with the worthless sons and daughters of Adam, embracing them in his arms and *kissing them with the kisses of his mouth*. O, pardoned sinner, while you view the smiles of his lovely face and feel his love shed abroad in your heart; you who have so often pierced him with your sins—are you not ready to sink into nothing in his presence, saying, *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashess?*

4th. A sacramental table is a dreadful place; for here heaven is brought down to earth. The richest branches of the tree of life, that grows in the midst of the paradise of God, overhang this table, and believers may stretch forth the hand of faith and pluck the sweet fruits of the heavenly Canaan. The table of God is spread with the dainties of Paradise: the bread of life, the hidden manna, and the grapes of Eschol, with all the rich blessings purchased by the death of Jesus Christ.

Certainly every communicant who views *the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, is ready to cry out with the patriarch, *The Lord is here. How dreadful is this place! this is none but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven*. When a king makes a banquet, it is in his palace, and Jehovah entertains his children in his own house. Hence, says the spouse, *He took me into his banqueting house and his banner over me was love.*—When children are seated with their father at his table, they see his face; they enjoy his smiles; and they converse familiarly with him. So, when the Children of Christ are seated with him at his table, however worthless they are in themselves, although *black as the tents of Kedar*, yet he embraces them in his arms, holds them in his bosom, and presses them to his heart. Then they can tell him all their wants, afflictions and temptations; by the key of faith they can unlock his cabinet and handle his rich jewels; they take hold of his covenant and obtain every thing the prayer of faith can ask. Hence saith the psalmist, *“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.”* And, saith Christ, *“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.”* When children are in their father's house, and seated at his table, they sometimes receive presents from him, and occasionally he shows them the patents which secure their interest in his estate. So, when the children of Christ are seated at a sacramental table, they often receive gracious tokens of his love, and are permitted to read

their Father's testament, which will shortly put them in possession of their heavenly inheritance.

Jacob, in his vision, saw a ladder connecting heaven and earth, *and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.* And when Christians are seated at a communion table, and are near Christ, they are at the gate of heaven, for Christ is at that gate. Time and eternity, heaven and earth, meet in him, and he is the medium of communication between the eternal I AM and worthless sinners. In his face they behold the glory of God, and through him they obtain a Pisgah's view of the promised land, and are blessed with foretastes of heaven. By faith, they take hold of the tree of life, which grows in the midst of the Paradise of God, and drink sweet daughts of his everlasting love. Now Jesus appears to them with his vesture dipped in blood, with a crown of glory upon his head, and when he smiles upon them, they adopt the language of the patriarch, saying, "*How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*"

SERMON XIX.

THE DEVICES OF SATAN.

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.—LUKE, xxii. 31.

THESE words were a part of our blessed Lord's last conversation with his disciples on that solemn and dreadful night in which he was betrayed. His hour was just at hand. Heaven, earth and hell were now drawn out in battle array against him. And yet, amidst all these difficulties, his love and compassion moved his heart towards his dear disciples; and, therefore, he institutes the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to be kept as an everlasting memorial of his dying love.

During the celebration of this solemn ordinance, he enters into sweet conversation with his disciples. He comforts their sinking hearts with the prospect of their meeting him in the celestial paradise: “*Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*” Then, in the words of our text, he warns them all in general, and Peter in particular, that Satan was preparing a dreadful attack upon them: “*Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.*” As a man, winnowing, sifts out the wheat, and leaves nothing but the chaff, so Satan will endeavor, by strong temptations, to sift away all your lively, spiritual exercise, your comforts and the graces of the Holy Spirit; to deprive you of the life and power of religion, and leave naught but dry formality, and a cold, lifeless profession.

The words may be applied to the awakened sinner. Satan desires to have him, that he may sift him as wheat; that he may sift away every conviction, every serious impression, and every sincere desire after God and religion. Satan knows that the present time is, in a spiritual manner, the sinner's day of grace,

and if he can only succeed in destroying conviction from the soul, he is, in all probability, sure of his prey.

But, with great propriety, this subject may be applied to the people of God, who have tasted his pardoning love, the sweet-ness of redeeming grace. Satan desires to have them, that he may sift them as wheat. The Devil knows, Christians, that, when you live near God, when you enjoy the life and power of religion in your souls, you are terrible as an army with banners. His subjects tremble, and his kingdom shakes to the centre. Therefore, he wishes to sift you. If he can only rob you of the sweet comforts of religion, and lead you into darkness far from God, his kingdom is safe; the cause of Christ sinks into ruin and the damnation of sinners becomes sure.

In discussing this subject, we shall—

I. Consider the nature of Satan's temptations.

II. Point out some of his subtle stratagems.

I. Consider the nature of Satan's temptations.

As the Devil is an intelligent spirit, retaining his angelic pow-ers and faculties, more crafty than all the human race collective-ly, doubtless he is thoroughly acquainted with every disposition, and adapts his temptations to the weaknesses of the children of God.

Is one man of a proud and ostentatious disposition? The Devil tempts him to display his attainments in religion. He is often more anxious to acquire a great name than to advance the divine glory. When he feels happy in religion, the Devil whis-per-s in his ear, all the Christians are noticing you; they love and esteem you; they will talk of you as a lively Christian. When he prays or exhorts with power and liberty, the Devil whispers, well done, you are the greatest Christian of the day. Hence, spiritual pride arises, and kills every spark of divine comfort in his soul. Is another disposed to be close and indus-trious? The Devil keeps him at work late and early—driving and pursuing the world—often to the neglect of his private de-votions or family prayer. At the end of the day he is so tired, that he cannot go to prayer meeting. If a sacrament comes on, he fears he will lose his crop, his servants will trifle and do nothing until he comes home; and, if he overcomes all these difficulties, the Devil suggests that new clothes are necessary, and he dreads the expense.

Is another of a peevish fretful disposition? The Devil brings about a thousand little provoking circumstances, which torment his soul and keep him grumbling and complaining, until he loses the spirit of prayer, and every sense of religion.

If there is any one of a resentful temper, the cunning enemy of souls instigates some of his gadding neighbors to poison his mind with tales of what others have been saying of him. At-

tempts have been made to injure his character; to take low and mean advantages of him. Thus his passions are excited; malice rages; his mind is miserable, and he loses the enjoyment of religion.

Many are easily persuaded by the Devil into sin, because they fear giving offence to their friends. If invited, they drink, engage in foolish conversation; and, if persuaded, they dance and frolic; and, at length, they become fond of all worldly amusements.

Is an innate propensity to nicety discovered? it is increased into an extraordinary fondness for dress; and much more time and trouble is taken to adorn the body, to arrange every trinket and ornament on the Sabbath morning, than to acquire a praying frame of mind, to prepare the heart for the reception of divine impressions. Those of a contrary disposition, who are disposed to be odd or clownish in dress, place much of their religion in plain, old fashioned clothes, and are more disturbed with the pride of their neighbor's apparel, than with the pride of their own hearts. They often feel themselves ill treated, if people do not make them the standard by which to regulate their conduct. Thus, while quarreling with the sins of others, vice creeps into their souls and they lose the life of religion.

Is any one in the habit of using spirituous liquors? The Devil uses all his art to decoy him into drunkenness, that he may expose himself and injure the cause of God. To men of warm passions, prone to lust, are presented the most alluring objects. The eyes and imagination are besieged continually by the most seductive devices of Satan. In short, such is the cunning of that old serpent, the Devil, that he well knows how to take advantage of the foibles and peculiarities of every character. To the avaricious, he presents wealth; to the ambitious, honor and fame. He tempts the lazy and slothful to neglect their business, to postpone the performance of all their duties until a more convenient time. The bold and rash are driven into concert and self-applause; reproving sin in a bad spirit, conducting themselves in such a manner as to disgust the wicked with religion. The timid and bashful he tries to shame out of the performance of duty, and keeps them afraid to pray in their families, or publicly to acknowledge Christ. The prudent are just suited to the Devil's purpose. For fear of running into extremes, they are so cautious as scarce to distinguish themselves from the wicked; and, for fear of doing something wrong they scarce do any thing right. But if Satan be wise in the choice of his temptations, he is also exceedingly diligent in their application. In general, he commences by presenting some small sin as it is called. In an innocent form, he offers to the mind some poisonous bait. It is often presented as a duty—as a

matter of necessity—and if he succeeds in his first attempt, a second will be made, and a third, until his attacks will become so frequent and powerful as scarce to be resisted. Thus David beholds Uriah's beautiful wife, while walking upon the roof of the house. The first temptation succeeds. Lust conceived brings forth sin. Then follows the temptation to adultery; and, finally, he is drawn into the commission of murder. Peter is first tempted to fear and cowardice, and soon he denies his Lord, and is then guilty of cursing and downright perjury. Judas is tempted to covetousness. This leads him to betray the Son of God, and, in the end, to commit suicide. As we said before, some small sin is presented. If the point is gained, the heart is hardened and prepared for some more gross offence; and thus it is that he gains upon the creature until he is betrayed into the most atrocious crimes.

II. Point out some of his subtle stratagems.

We have, heretofore, spoken of the admirable adaptation of the Devil's devices to the dispositions of men. We will now proceed to point out the various means by which he endeavors to sift from the soul all divine comforts and impressions. As the skilful farmer provides himself with sieves and riddles suited to his purpose, so the Devil is well provided with sifters fitted to every time and circumstance—to every situation of individuals, church or commonwealth. He sifts them in the sieve of vanity, by leading them into vain conversation and idle mirth.

When professing neighbors meet together, the Devil often holds up to their view pleasing worldly prospects. Then *out of the abundance of their hearts their mouths speak*. They converse about their lands, houses and all their worldly affairs. They tell of the various plans they are laying to obtain money, to amass wealth. These things are lawful in their proper place; and, therefore, they conceive themselves to be in no danger, and they are driven away into the wide field of carnality. Conscience falls asleep. Then comes fondness for mirth and levity. A love of jesting, of vain and foolish conversation, possesses the whole soul; and as iron sharpens iron, so they become tools in the hand of the Devil to harden each other. One has a diverting story to tell; another some laughable jest or some curious remarks upon the ignorance or awkwardness of a neighbor. One strange remark, one foolish jest, brings about another, until they are overwhelmed in merriment and laughter.

Thus the Spirit is grieved, and all sense of divine obligation, all thoughts of eternal things are driven from the mind. In this way, professing Christians taint the morals of their children and domestics. It happens frequently, that young professors of religion, who formerly prayed and held sweet converse with each other about Christ, heaven and what the Lord had done for

their souls ; when they meet now, it is only as instruments of the Devil, to harden each other's hearts, to banish religion from their souls.

The Devil has another sieve by which he tries the faith of the people of God, and relieves the convicted sinner of disagreeable, but useful impressions. This is an angry resentful spirit, which has dreadful influence in neighborhoods and families. This often leads the Christian to speak ill of his neighbor; to ridicule his person, his family, or may be, to satirize his religious exercises. Immediately the Devil sets off a runner to tell what remarks have been made by such a one about him, and he never fails to hear an exaggerated story. Whilst listening, Satan tempts him to grow angry, and resent such treatment. O, says the Devil, he has used you as a rascal; he surely has no religion; he is a hypocrite; all his holy exercises are pretended, and, since he has treated you so shamefully, demand full satisfaction. If you are a Christian, act like a man of honor, and don't suffer yourself to be abused; if you do, you will be insulted upon all occasions.

The Devil brings about innumerable petty difficulties in business to perplex the husband; then tempts him to speak harshly to his wife—to whom suspicions of his attachment are suggested; he loves you not as man should love his wife. She retaliates—answers him with tartness and severity. Provoked by such conduct in his wife, the man becomes enraged, and abuses her, sometimes in the most shocking, barbarous manner. And thus it is that the peace and harmony of families are destroyed; and through the instrumentality of those who profess religion, Satan manages to effect his purposes.

Children, servants, or hirelings, are tempted to disobedience, slothfulness or a neglect of business; to unfaithfulness in the discharge of their duty, and sometimes are prevailed upon to steal, waste or destroy things of value. These crimes are highly irritating to heads of families. Their resentment is kindled and vented in anger upon the transgressors, who conclude that religion is folly, and that prayer and all other Christian duties are hypocrisy and deceit.

The punishment, instead of producing reform, only leads the offender to devise every means by which he may irritate and perplex his master or parents.

Pride and worldly-mindedness form another riddle, by which the arch fiend sifts from the soul the comforts of divine grace; and mark with what ingenuity he lays his snares. All his hellish craft and cunning are used to conceal them. He covers them under the fair pretext of public utility, decency or industry; he suggests to the Christian that it is necessary for him to have as good a house and farm as any of his neighbors; he must be as

well dressed; his children must be clothed neatly; and, unless he attains to these things, his family will be considered as mean and contemptible. A thousand schemes are devised to acquire honor and amass wealth; he rises early, and sets up late; all is hurry and bustle; business presses; all must be given up to facilitate the acquisition of the empty trifles of the world. There is no time to attend the preaching of the Word; family worship and private prayer must be neglected; and they must conform to the fashions and customs of the world. To succeed in their ambitious designs it is necessary to court the favor of the wicked; to associate with them and adopt their habits, and ere they are aware, the deep draughts of carnality have intoxicated the brain. *Blinded by the God of this world*, they have lost all the spirituality and enjoyment of Godliness.

Another riddle is that of *discontent*, by means of which men are led to overlook all the mercies of God, become ungrateful, and suffer the most exquisite torment of mind. Hence, they feel no disposition to pray; their little worldly calamities swallow up all anxiety for the Church of Christ. Presently they fancy their lot harder than that of any other person on earth; their wants more numerous; their difficulties greater; their circumstances more distressing. Hear the language of discontent; I have more sickness in my family, more bad luck than any other person; my horses die; my cattle don't thrive; my hogs are stolen; my crops turn out badly; I am scarce of corn, scarce of meat, and scarce of money. What am I to do? I am in debt, and know not how I shall pay. If I owe a few shillings, I am pestered and harassed almost out of my life; but when a thousand dollars are due me, it is impossible to get a cent. While at his daily business, every thing goes wrong; he is troubled and fretted, and no man is so plagued as he is. None have such disobedient children, or such worthless servants; one is slothful—another careless and inattentive. Indeed, he is so vexed, so troubled, that neither temporal nor spiritual considerations can comfort him.

The poor mother thinks she has a worse chance for time and eternity than any one else. She has cross and mischievous children, wicked and lazy servants; she can get nothing done; her children are in rags; how can she clothe them? She needs this necessary and the other; indeed, a thousand which she cannot obtain. Over these matters she frets and perplexes her mind until entirely disqualified for the indwelling of the graces of the Holy Spirit.

Nor are these the only means by which the Devil kills the power of religion. *Contention* is one of the most subtle and effective engines of hell. Satan cares not upon what subjects the Christian disputes, if he can tempt him to do it in an evil spirit.

Some one in his great zeal for the truth contends warmly for predestination, election and final perseverance; and, unless he is very cautious, he will do it in a wrong manner; he will condemn every person holding an opposite opinion, and declare that no one who disbelieves his doctrine, or believes in falling from grace, can be a Christian.

Such declarations offend the Arminian. They are insulting; they are not justifiable. He answers the Calvinists in language equally harsh and unchristian. He abuses all opposed to his sentiments, and delivers to condemnation the believer in a particular election or final perseverance.

Another advocates baptism, and denies that there is any other baptism beside immersion. He contends earnestly that all unbaptized persons—such as have not gone under the water—are wrong; they contradict him upon the subject, and he must needs be mad about the matter.

Thus it is, brethren, that our great adversary, the Devil, divides the Church of Christ against itself, and makes the friends of Jesus the instruments to effect his own diabolical purposes. Then beware how you contend with each other, lest you injure the cause of your Master. Be careful, lest even while you suppose yourselves doing God service, that yon are not laboring faithfully for the Devil.

From what has been said concerning the nature of the stratagems of the Devil—being particularly suited to the various characters and circumstances of mankind, and from some few of those stratagems which we have pointed out—Christians should be guarded on every side, that they may not be taken by surprise and confounded. He knows the weak point in every character, and will surely take advantage of it. Though you may be strong, he will overpower you; though you may be wise, he will confound you; for, he is, indeed, a wily and powerful spirit. He will lurk in your bosoms, and you will not find him out; he will hide himself in your words, and you will not suspect him. Often in the most delicious sweets are concealed the deadliest poison. Watch and pray, that you be not deceived by appearances. Even when feasting upon the hidden manna of the love of God, you should suspect temptation nigh. In such moments, think of the text; remember that "*Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.*" Trust in the Lord; forget not your own weakness; avoid every sin—even the smallest sin; be induced by no consideration to commit the most trivial offence. Recollect that a small trespass prepares the soul for a greater breach of the divine law. But for power to resist the assaults of the enemy, rely upon the omnipotence of the great Jehovah, who will be thy strength and thy everlasting righteousness.

SERMON XX.

THE SUPERABOUNDING GRACE OF GOD.

Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.—ROMANS, v. 20.

In this epistle, the apostle Paul, by many unanswerable arguments proves, that all men, both Jews and Gentiles, have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and consequently cannot obtain salvation by the deeds of the law; for, “*by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*” From this, he infers that the true believer is justified by faith without the deeds of the law by the righteousness of the God man Christ Jesus being imputed unto him, which righteousness is so extensive that the largest demands of law and justice can be fully satisfied, and the guilty sinner eternally freed from condemnation; for as the first Adam was the head and representative of all his ordinary posterity, and by his offence, has brought guilt and death upon them all, so Christ, the second Adam, the head and representative of all his spiritual seed, has wrought out a perfect righteousness of infinite worth, which, upon their believing, is imputed to them; and, on the account thereof, they are justified and entitled to eternal life and glory, and through his righteousness rich grace is manifested to be much more powerful to save than the sin of Adam was to damn, as is clearly proved in the verses immediately preceding the text. But the legal Jews would object, that, according to this doctrine, the law was given in vain, if none could attain to righteousness and life by it, and would ask why God gave the law at all if this doctrine be true? To such the apostle replies, that the law was given for a different purpose—in subserviency to the gospel. The law entered to discover the

abounding of sin, that so the way might be prepared for a more illustrious display of the superabounding grace of God, which pardons and saves from such abounding iniquities.

The text may be divided into two parts. In the first, we may observe—

1st. The subject spoken of—the Law—the eternal, unalterable rule of right and wrong, founded upon the holy nature and perfections of God, the declaration of his holy will to mankind, binding all his intelligent creatures to perfect, perpetual and universal obedience, threatening eternal death and damnation to every sin.

2d. What is predicated of this law. It entered in together with sin, say some, in order to condemn where it is; say others, together with the gospel promise, in order to be subservient to it in carrying on the great designs of grace. This last sense seems to be favored by the apostle, when he says of the law, *“It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.”* And, again: *“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”*

3d. The end or design of the law thus entering. *That the offence might abound.* Either that first offence of Adam, of which the apostle had been speaking as the cause of death and condemnation to all men; or else sin in general, which the law does not make to abound by any proper efficiency in producing it; for the law is holy, just and good, but by its discovering the abounding of sin; for it was observed by some that the Hebrews usually say such a thing is, when it appears to be. So it may be said, that sin abounds by the entering of the law, because the law discovers the abounding of sin, as light let into a dark room manifests the abounding of the day, which was not discerned before; and this accords with the language of the apostle: *“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For, without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.”*

In the second part of the text, we may observe—

1st. The subject spoken of—Grace—the free favor of God, in pardoning and saving sinners through the righteousness of Christ, which clearly appears from the verse immediately following the text, *“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so*

might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

2d. What is predicated of grace. It abounded much more than sin—that is, the free grace of God which reigns through the righteousness of Christ unto eternal life, is much more powerful to pardon and save, than sin is to deform and damn, and in its works of salvation does far exceed any thing that sin has done in its works of damnation.

From this view of the text, it appears natural, in its farther consideration,

I. To shew some things in which the abounding of sin is discovered by the law.

II. Mention some things in which the saving grace of God in Christ does much more abound.

III. Improve the subject.

I. Shew some things in which the abounding of sin is discovered by the law.

1st. The law entering, discovers the abounding evil that is in the very nature of sin. This law which enters is a declaration of the will of God, founded in his infinitely holy perfections; an eternal rule to all intelligent creatures. It is the law of Him who is the great Creator and Upholder of the Universe; who, consequently, has the most unquestionable right to rule his own creatures, and to give them laws for that purpose. It is the law of Him who is infinite, eternal, unchangeable, and independent—boundless in wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, and who, therefore, is infinitely fit to rule.

Reason and revelation both tell us that sin is the transgression of the law of God, either by omission or commission, and the very language of a transgression of the law is a reflection upon it either as impracticable, and, therefore, unreasonable, or else not adapted to the true happiness of the creature; therefore, it must be either foolish or tyrannical. By casting such a reflection upon the law, the infinitely glorious Lawgiver is dishonored, as if he were not sufficiently wise to make a law adapted to the true happiness of his creatures, or if he did know what was best for them, he has not sufficient goodness to grant it; which last seems plainly held forth in the first temptation to sin in the case of our first parents; for, so far as man prefers his own choice to the law of God, so far he practically says, that his own will is fitter to prescribe a happifying rule than the will of Jehovah; and, so far as man complies with the temptations of Satan to sin, so far he declares that the will of the Devil is more fit for the rule of his happiness than the will of God; and considering the law as a transcript of the moral perfections of Jehovah, and conformity to it enforced by a penalty, the language of sin then is, that it is better to forfeit all the good God

can confer, and risk all the evil his wrath can inflict, than be conformed to such a Being. Now, considering that the glory of God, thus dishonored, is infinite, there must be an infinite evil in sin; for, though no act of a finite being, can have infinite dignity or demerit attached to it, arising from the agent separately considered, and although the obedience of a finite being cannot receive an infinite worth from the infinitude of the object obeyed, because the act is not adequate to the object, for even a perfect creature cannot be said to love and delight in any more glory than he can have some apprehensions of, and consequently as his apprehensions so his love and delight must fall infinitely short of being adequate to the infinite glory of God. But sin, being a rejecting and denying of the Deity entirely, both what is apprehended of him and what is not, there is a dishonor cast upon infinite glory, therefore there must be an infinite evil in sin, and as these things are not peculiar to some kinds or degrees of sin, but included in its nature, so we may conclude that the law discovers an abundant, yea an infinite evil in sin.

2d. The law also discovers the venomous and infectious nature of sin. The first drop of the venomous contagion presented by that old serpent, the Devil, and tasted by curious Eve, shed its deadly venom through the whole human nature, and mortally poisoned every faculty of the soul and every member, nerve and muscle of the body, every thought, word and action of all the numberless millions of mankind in every age of the world; hence the understanding is dark; the heart is enmity against God; the conscience defiled with dead works; the memory prone to forget God; the affections polluted; *every imagination of the thoughts of the heart evil continually*, and the actions conformable thereto. What an abundance of sin does the law discover, seeing that *by the offence of one many were made sinners*.

3d. The law discovers an abundant strength in sin. When that venomous evil, sin, entered, and by man's consent, God, who might justly have left the whole human race as he did the fallen angels, to be eternal monuments of his wrath, of his sovereign mercy, pitied them, and when he saw them weltering in their blood, he revealed a way of recovery which his infinite wisdom had devised, and his infinite love consented to from all eternity. This revelation of a method of salvation continued to prove clearer by new discoveries in different ages, till at last the glorious Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his wings, and shone with noon-day brightness on our benighted world. But all the manifestations of divine love sin despises, all the overtures of divine mercy sin tramples beneath its feet. In the midst of this contest the law steps in to the assistance of grace, and declares to man his need of salvation, by telling him what extensive obedience God requires, and tells him also how dreadfully

the infinite God threatens the least disobedience. But sin, Leviathan-like, treats all this brass and iron like straw and rotten wood. Then the Almighty Spirit steps in, and by his operations, discovers the law precept, and opens the sinner's eyes to see it, and makes its penalty thunder so amazingly loud and as it were flash the vengeance of God in the sinner's face, until he feels the foretastes of hell within him. But, as if all that sin had done before had been only the faint notions of a sleeping man, it never shewed its strength till now. Atheism, hardness of heart, legality and enmity against God, rush in with their ten thousands at their heels, and clearly prove that nothing short of the omnipotent arm and soul-sanctifying spirit of God can conquer them, as is evident, was the case with Paul and his sins while the law kept at a distance. He was, in his own apprehension alive, and sin appeared dead; but when the commandment came with light and power to his conscience, being sent home by the enlightening and convincing influences of the Holy Spirit, then sin revived and took occasion from the commandment to work in him all manner of concupiscence. As water, when opposed by a dam, rages and foams with greater strength, so his corruptions, enraged by such oppositions, threatened to carry law, gospel and enlightening influences all before them. Now, since this is the case, what abundant strength does the law discover in sin.

4th. The law also discovers an abundance of damning weight in sin. One offence of Adam sunk him and all the numberless thousands of his ordinary posterity into condemnation, and had all the myriads of mighty angels who surrounded the throne of God above, come to man's assistance, and helped him to bear the weight of sin, it would have sunk him and them together into the burning pit of Tophet, where they should have groaned forever beneath the flaming wrath of God. Then what a dreadful damnation must all the aggravated sins of one poor gospel-rejecting sinner deserve? No being, whose power is less than infinite, could bear up under the load. When the co-equal Son of God himself assumed humanity, and stepped in as a substitute under the weight of sin, his innocent humanity, supported by his omnipotence, was so crushed that he sweat great drops of blood falling down to the ground, and to expiate the guilt of sin he yielded up the Ghost. O how dreadful is the damning weight of sin! How did it bruise the innocent Lamb of God, until it brought him to the grave? Think then, O sinners, how it will sink you into the lowest regions of hell, when through all eternity you will writhe beneath the burning wrath of God, if you live and die in a Christless state. But, some may say, if sin so abound as to produce all these dreadful consequences, how can grace so much more abound as to prevent them? To such I answer,

God, by his Spirit, in the words of text, informs us that *where sin abounded grace did much more abound*, which brings us—

II. To mention some things in which the saving grace of God in Christ does much more abound.

1st. It appears that grace is more abundant than sin, because in a just and holy manner it completely conquers it, and removes all its dreadful effects from pardoned sinners. A weak man may put to death, but none, save God, can restore to life. Although one sin conquered and killed mankind, yet Almighty grace can subdue millions of sins, and deliver all true believers completely from them, for it restores the spiritually dead to life, it sanctifies all their powers and faculties, and, in due time, will bring them to greater abundance of glory and bliss than Adam lost, and will confirm them in the full enjoyment of heaven through the boundless ages of eternity, which clearly proves that *where sin abounded grace did much more abound*.

2d. Though sin abounded, yet grace much more abounded in carrying on its glorious designs in the recovery of fallen sinners. Had sin accomplished all to which it tended, what would have been the loss? All mankind. But all nations, before God, are but as the drop of the bucket, or the small dust of the balance; to Him, they are as nothing, and less than nothing and vanity. One act of the Almighty can as easily create a host of angels as an atom. How small, then, to the Deity would the expense have been had all the human race been lost? But what did grace expend for man's recovery? Heaven's richest treasure: “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” The second person of the Holy Trinity, took our nature, a true body and a reasonable soul, and connected it so strictly with his own, that in the sight of the law and justice of God, these two natures, so infinitely different, constitute but one person; and this infinitely glorious Being was given to obey, bleed and die for the redemption of poor, fallen, guilty sinners, whom grace chose to redeem. May we not then cry out with the apostle, “*Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*”

3d. If we consider the righteousness which sin destroyed and that which grace restores, it will appear “*Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.*” What was the righteousness of innocent Adam, and what would it have been if continued in for thousands of years? Only the righteousness of a mere creature, which, however long continued in, is only of finite worth; consequently the righteousness of myriads of such would be as light as a feather when laid in the balance against one sin committed against an infinite God. But the righteousness which grace has provided for believers, is a righteousness wrought out by Jesus

Christ, who is not only man in our nature, to obey and suffer, but also the Infinite God, in the same person; and as his sufferings were those of an Infinite Being, they have an infinite worth sufficient to be laid in the balance with the demerit of sin, and as the obedience and satisfaction of the Lord Jesus Christ, possessed a dignity in proportion to that of his person; therefore, they were of infinite value, and were sufficient to atone for the sins of all true believers, or the sins of the whole world, or of ten thousand worlds. This infinite righteousness grace has provided, and imputes it to believers for their justification. How clearly then does it appear that "*where sin abounded, grace did much abound.*"

4th. It will appear that grace does much more abound than sin, if we compare the covenant head sin has ruined with the covenant grace has provided. The first Adam, as a covenant head grace has provided. The first Adam, as a covenant head, was made a living soul, and, had he continued in his state of innocence, he might have kept life for all—himself and all his posterity: *but he was of the earth—earthly*—a fallible creature, and one sin might and did throw him and all his offspring into eternal ruin, from which he could by no means recover himself and them. But the second Adam, provided by grace, *is a quickening spirit.* The Lord from heaven, who can communicate life to the dead, so that believers having a real vital union with this covenant head, are not only interested in that infinite righteousness which he wrought out, but they are also inseparably united to the Infinite Eternal Fountain of Life, in whom as Mediator, and Covenant Head, it hath pleased the Father, that all fullness of grace and life should dwell, yea, in him dwells all *the fullness of the Godhead bodily*; therefore, it is said *their life is hid with Christ in God*, secured by the life of the everlasting God, so that while Jesus, who is very God, exists, they will be saved from eternal death; therefore, *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*

5th. This will further appear, if we consider that grace has restored believers to a much nearer relation to God than that from which man fell by reason of sin. Innocent man sustained towards God the relation of a creature to his Creator, and the meanest insect sustains the same relation. Innocent man also sustained a covenant relation to God, and, while he kept that covenant, God sustained to him the relation of a friend and protector; but sin might, yea, it did change this relation into that of a sin-avenging Judge. But grace effects such a vital union, with Christ, that believers are so joined to the Lord as to be *one spirit—members of his body—of his flesh and of his bones*; they, with him, constitute one mystical body; they are one with him, who is essentially one with the Father and Holy Spirit. This

union the Lord Jesus Christ seems to have in view when he says, "*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me; and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.*" When believers are made one with Jesus Christ, God, the Father, by a judicial act acknowledges them as his children: "*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God;*" being the children of God they are *heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ*; they are heirs of an *inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them*; yea, all things are theirs, whether *Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs, and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* Now does this relation not far exceed that which sin destroyed? therefore, *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*

6th. The glory of God is more clearly manifested, and the happiness of the redeemed in heaven more exalted than if sin had never entered into the world. If perfect innocence had constantly reigned through all the creation, intelligent beings might have known something of the perfections of Jehovah, which would then have been manifested; but how little would his creation and the dealings of his common providence towards innocent creatures, have preached of that glorious name of God. "*The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, shewing mercy unto thousands, and forgiving iniquities, transgressions and sins.*" How little would the works of creation and Providence have shewn of the justice and righteousness of Jehovah who *set forth his Son to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* Thus grace hath brought about a glorious method of salvation, in which mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other, and into which adoring angels desire to look, and through all eternity sinners redeemed from wrath will contemplate the wisdom, love and grace therein displayed, with wonder, joy and praise, and they will forever dwell in the presence, and enjoy the smiles of Jesus, who swam through a sea of blood, yea, through the burning ocean of God's wrath, to save them from the lowest abyss of misery, and bring them to the highest summit of glory of which their natures are capable. This wonderful plan of salvation, which astonishes the angels of heaven and confounds the devils of hell, in which the divine per-

fections shine with an infinite lustre, never would have been manifested had not sin entered the world. But, when we speak of manifesting the divine glory, we mean to the creature—not to God himself; for as his glory, in itself, is unchangeably the same, so his knowledge of it is unchangeable, and the more sinless beings see of God, the more they love him; for if they saw any thing in the Deity they did not love, they would be sinfully imperfect; and delight will always be in proportion to enjoyment of the beloved object; therefore, the creature's happiness is necessarily in proportion to their enjoyment of God. And as God loves his own infinite glory supremely, so the more any creature loves God, the more he is like him, and the more he is like God, the more glorious he is—from all which, it appears that the glory and happiness enjoyed by the redeemed in heaven, and also by the angels there, will be far greater than if sin had never entered; and whether it may not be greater in its sum than all the bliss and glory which would have been enjoyed by the whole universe of men and angels, if they had all stood in perfection, I shall at present, leave to be more positively determined, either by a clearer insight into the word of God, or by the light of glory, and shall proceed

III. To improve the subject; and

1st. If sin have such an infinite evil in its nature; if its venom be so infectious, its strength so great, and its damning weight so heavy, then it is not wonderful that believers hate it, groan under it, and long to be delivered from it. Sinners, in their Christless state, are *dead in trespasses and sins*, and are not sensible of their miserable condition. Their eyes are so blinded by the God of this world, that they cannot see the infinite evil and intrinsic vileness of sin; but they will cherish it and indulge in it, although it should be at the expense of their eternal damnation. They will venture upon it in spite of all the restraints of education and the accusations of conscience, the faithful warning of God, and the earnest entreaties of a beseeching Saviour, and will voluntarily join with the Devil to excuse and extenuate it, in order to pacify an uneasy conscience. But it is very different with the true believer who has had the law brought home with power to his conscience, and has thereby discovered the infinite evil and accursed nature of sin, and has been brought to such a heartfelt sense of his exposure to the everlasting wrath of a sin-hating God, and of his own inability to help himself, as hath brought him to the necessity of venturing his eternal salvation upon Christ, then *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* shone into his dark and benighted mind, and gave him such views of the infinite glory and the supreme excellence of the Divine Perfections, that he hungers and longs to be perfectly freed from sin, and to be conformed into the image of God.

Now, he sees the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and views it in its hateful, filthy, God-dishonoring nature. Now, he feels it as the habitual plague and torture of his soul. When he takes a view of his heart and sees its unfathomable depths of iniquity; when he feels inbred corruption prevailing against him, how does he cry out with the apostle, "*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" How does he mourn, lament and groan when he has a proper sense of the heavy burden and soul-polluting nature of sin? and it is no wonder that he does, for perfection in holiness is the heaven for which his soul longs; and with nothing less can he be satisfied than freedom from every sin. Well, poor, burdened souls, if this be the longing desire of your hearts, if you thirst to be freed from its soul-defiling and God-dishonoring nature, and long to arrive in heaven, because Christ, the beloved of your souls is there, then lift up your desponding heads, the day of your redemption draws nigh; shortly your beloved Jesus will send for you and take you home to your father's house, where sin and all its bitter effects are banished to an eternal distance, for *there is neither death, nor sorrow, nor crying there*, and there *God shall wipe all tears from your eyes*.

2nd. From what has been said, we may see how astonishing the love of Christ is, who submitted to have a thing so vile and abominable as sin imputed to him, and to have its whole condemning weight laid upon his shoulders. So great was his desire for the salvation of sinners, that he thought no sufferings too great, no price too dear, to purchase their redemption. He knew the dreadfulness of his Father's wrath, which he must endure. He knew that inexorable justice would not spare him, but would exact the last farthing; he knew that he must endure shame, ignominy and death, before he could finish the work of their salvation; yet infinite love, stronger than death, and that could not be drowned by the floods of Almighty vengeance, brought him skipping over all these burning mountains, to prevent the blow of divine justice from falling eternally upon guilty rebels; see him leaving his Father's bosom, condescending to assume our degraded nature, and taking upon him the infinite weight of our guilt, which would have crushed ten thousand worlds of men and angels to the lowest hell and kept them there forever; see him in the form of a servant, reduced to the lowest state of poverty, *despised and rejected of men*; and, although he was the Everlasting God, the Creator and Upholder of all worlds, hear him complaining, *the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head*. Hear him under the apprehensions of the dreadful storm of God's wrath, which was about to fall upon him, crying out, *Now is my soul troubled*. See him bruised in the wine press of the wrath of God, until the blood is forced through every pore of

his body; see him before Pilate's bar, buffeted, spat upon, crowned with thorns, and condemned to die. Behold him on Mount Calvary, crucified between two thieves, and crying out beneath the hidings of his Father's face, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama, Sabacthani; My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" and giving up the ghost; and all this to save a perishing world from sin and hell. Well may angels and saints wonder, adore and admire *the breadth and length, and depth and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.* O sinners, how can you dare to despise such a salvation, which none but God could devise and which could be purchased at a price short of the blood of his own son? Remember, if you continue to reject this salvation, and trample under foot the blood of the loving and compassionate Jesus, the day is coming when he will trample you in his fury, and tread you down in his sore displeasure, and stain all his raiment in the blood of your souls, and bruise you eternally in the wine press of his wrath. For the Lord's sake, and for your precious souls' sake, be persuaded to consider this in time, and fly to Christ while his bowels of compassion are yearning over you, and he is expostulating with you, as he did with Israel of old; "*How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together.*"

3d. It is not wonderful that convinced sinners are so weary and heavy laden when they are struggling with the strength of sin and pressed with its damning weight. When, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, they discover its unfathomable depth, that their hearts are totally depraved and opposed to the holy nature of the law; when they feel themselves sinking beneath the enormous load, ready to fall headlong into burning Tophet, there to weep and wail through all eternity, in the society of Devils and damned ghosts, beneath the flaming billows of God's wrath—I say when they have clear views of these things they will not spend their precious time easy and unconcerned, like the thoughtless and guilty multitude around them; they cannot satisfy an alarmed conscience with a few heartless words in form of prayer, an external round of duty, nor some faint resolutions of future amendment. All these they esteem as but hay and stubble before the flames of hell. Now, and not till now, do they begin, in good earnest, to seek salvation. Now, they cry, with the Jews under the preaching of Peter, "*Men and brethren what shall we do?*" And never was freedom sweeter to a poor captive, nor a pardon to a condemned criminal, than salvation is to an awakened sinner, struggling with the power of sin and sinking under its damning weight.

4th. Is there such a damning weight in sin? Then those who

can live easy and contented in a Christless state, must be *dead in trespasses and sin*. Poor graceless sinners, who can live from year to year without bowing your knees before God in your families, or in secret; you who can indulge in all manner of vicious practices; you who never seriously examine the state of your souls; you who are satisfied with the mere form of religion, but are entire strangers to communion with God, in whose souls Christ has not been formed the hope of glory, you are all *dead in trespasses and sins*; and if your eyes were not blinded by the God of this world, you could not rest one day in your present condition. Did you feel the power of your sins; were you sensible of their damning weight; had you any suitable apprehensions of the misery of an unconverted state; did you see that all the perfections of Jehovah are engaged for your damnation, while you remain strangers to a saving change of heart; had you a proper apprehension of what a dreadful thing it is to fall into the hands of an offended God, how would your hearts be wrung with anguish, and your cries for mercy pierce the heavens? but you can live as unconcerned as if all were well, without spending a serious thought about your soul's salvation. But remember, if you persist in your present course, you will soon be convinced of your folly and madness. You are already under sentence of condemnation; ere long that sentence will be executed; then down you must go to the regions of damnation, sunk beneath the damning weight of sin, crushed by the omnipotent arm of the Infinite God, where wisdom, power and justice will be eternally exerted to make you completely miserable.

5th. Is the damning weight of sin so great? Then how dreadful is that threatening of Christ, "*If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*," i. e. they shall die under the strength and damning weight of all their sins, and so continue through all eternity. If one sin sunk Adam and all his numerous race into condemnation, how dreadful must the damnation of gospel despisers be, who are chargeable with innumerable multitudes of sins? and, what is infinitely more dreadful than all, they are chargeable with the sin of rejecting an offered Saviour, of trampling under foot the blood of the Eternal Son of God, and of rejecting the only remedy God has provided, the aggravation of which sin neither men nor angels can describe. "*He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnessesses. Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of Grace?*" Sinners, who are out of Christ, are all chargeable with this crime. You are chargeable with rejecting Christ and that salvation which infinite wisdom, love and grace have provided; and that

threatening of Christ already quoted, will unavoidably fall upon you, if you continue in your present state; *you shall die in your sins* and be eternally crushed beneath their damning weight; and where will you fly when the compassionate Jesus becomes your enemy? or how will you escape from the fury of the lion of the tribe of Judah, when his wrath begins to burn? or what will your feelings be when he comes to deal with you for your heaven-daring conduct in despising his grace and trampling upon his precious blood? When you see, as it were, all his perfections marching in battle array against you, and engaged for your everlasting ruin; when the poisoned arrows of Almighty, which make the stoutest Devils in hell roar, come upon you, barbed with wrath, and pierce your inmost souls, O how will you endure when he will run upon you with all his fury, grasp you in his omnipotent arms, and tear you to pieces, when none can or dare attempt to deliver you? Then, in vain, will you cry to the rocks of the mountains to cover you from his vengeance; then the rocks and mountains will be as deaf to your entreaties as you are now to the calls of the gospel.

6th. From what has been said, we may know how deeply believers are indebted to free grace for their deliverance from the reigning power and damning weight of sin. How should they admire and adore that Sovereign Free Grace, which has made them vessels of mercy and monuments of grace, while thousands as good by nature as they perish in their sins? How should they be filled with wonder, gratitude and praise, at the condescension of the Son of God, who freely undertook to pay the debt they owed to divine justice, and never flinched from the work till he paid the last farthing, answered all the demands of the law in their behalf, and purchased eternal life and glory for them! How should they praise the Spirit of Grace who has convinced them of their need of Christ, who cut them off from all their refuges of lies, and, at length, bound their wills to accept of salvation on the terms of free grace, while others have quenched their convictions and returned to their former evil courses, like *the dog to his vomit, and the sow, that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire*. O, believer, from the earliest period of eternity, the Lord Jesus Christ has been employed in devising and executing a plan by which all the perfections of the Godhead may be glorified in your salvation; and, in a short time, he will put you in full possession of all the bliss and glory which the grace of God designs for you; and how sweet the thought when you shall have safely arrived at your everlasting rest! then you will be far beyond the reach of Satan's temptations and completely delivered from all trouble and distress. Then, when you view what God has bestowed upon you, and what you have deserved, when you look down upon hell and see the vast difference Free Grace has

made betwixt you and the inhabitants of those dark regions; O what gratitude and delight will you feel when you reflect—Yonder lake was my deserved portion—These had been my doleful groans—these my endless pains—that dark dungeon my eternal prison, had not Free Grace interposed. Yonder death was the wages of my sin; but this eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ, my Lord.

7th. From what has been said, we may see how certain the believer's salvation is through grace. Sin has ruined the human race, and exposes them to eternal death; but more abounding grace destroys the power of sin in their souls, and will, at last, remove its very being from them. The covenant head grace has provided is a physician of infinite skill, who cures all diseased souls that come to him to be healed. *"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."* Grace has provided for the believer every thing necessary for his justification, sanctification and complete salvation.

8th. When we view abounding sin, which reigns unto death, and much more abounding grace, which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, it is a matter of great moment for us to know under the government of which of these we are. All who hear me this day are either under the government of sin, and slaves to their lusts, or under that of grace, with Jesus Christ for the captain of their salvation and the heirs of eternal life. That you may decide to which of these you belong, I call upon you for impartial answers to these questions:

1st. Have you ever been made truly weary of the government of sin? Has the law of God been brought home to your consciences in its length, breadth and spirituality? Have you been convinced you were in a graceless state, and that, continuing in this condition, you must be damned forever? And have you been brought to cry for mercy as earnestly as a condemned criminal would for a pardon? If you are strangers to these exercises, then, as the Lord liveth, you are not under the government of grace; and, if you live and die in your present condition, you will sink forever beneath the damning weight of sin in that *lake which burns with fire and brimstone*. If you have not taken the first steps towards reconciliation to God, it is evident you are under the dominion of sin. But these steps you may have taken; yet, if you have gone no farther, you are strangers to the government of grace.

2nd. Have you been brought to see that your own righteousness, your prayers, tears, groans, vows and good works, are but as dross and dung in the sight of the Holy God; that these things, instead of constituting a righteousness for your justification, if depended upon, will be as fuel to burn you in hell

forever? Have you seen clearly that nothing short of the grace of God can save you from the government of sin and from all its bitter consequences? Therefore, as poor beggars, have you cast yourselves at the footstool of a Sovereign God?

3rd. Has the Holy Spirit given you a view of the glory, beauty, and excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ, as God Man Mediator? Have you seen his fullness, willingness and sufficiency, to save to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him? Have you seen such a glory and excellency in the plan of salvation by Free Grace as has gained your hearty consent to its terms, so that you have no desire to be saved in any other way?

4th. Do you habitually pant after a sense of God's love and conformity to him? Does the enjoyment of his presence, though imperfect by faith, constitute your chief happiness in this world? Is the design of your attending the means of grace that you may have communion with God? Is the withdrawing of the light of his countenance distressing to your soul; and are you uneasy until it is restored? Is perfect conformity to him in holiness, and the full enjoyment of him, and perfect freedom from sin, the heaven your souls earnestly desire?

5th. Are your hearts moulded for living upon that grace which is treasured up in Christ? When your consciences are polluted with guilt, do you habitually apply to Christ for relief? Do you regularly apply to him for light and strength to subdue indwelling sin, and for grace to live to the glory of God? If, upon a close and impartial examination, you can declare, in the presence of God, that these have been your exercises, and that such are the habitual frames of your minds, then you have reason to conclude that you are under the sweet government of Grace, and although you have many struggles with indwelling sin, although sometimes fear that some day you will fall by the hand of your enemies, yet Christ, the captain of your salvation, will take you home conquerors, and more than conquerors over all your enemies. All the perfections of Jehovah are engaged for your complete and eternal salvation, and, ere long, he will put you in full possession of the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world, when you shall be fully satisfied in the immediate sight and full fruition of God through all eternity.

But if your consciences bear witness against you, that you are strangers to these exercises, then, as sure as there is truth in the word of God, you are under the dominion of sin, and in a state of enmity against God; and, if you continue in your present state of rebellion, sentence of condemnation will shortly be executed upon you. Then you will be convinced to your eternal sorrow, how dreadful it is to fall into the hands of the Living God; for then you will feel the iron rod of his vengeance; then

you will be bruised in the wine press of his wrath; then you will sink beneath the damning load of all your sins, and particulary beneath the soul-damning sin of slighting the blood of Christ. Poor, Christless souls, reflect on your sad condition; be willing to know the worst of your case, pray earnestly for the awakening influences of the Holy Spirit; flee to Christ while the door of mercy stands open to receive you and the willing arms of Christ are expanded to embrace you. He is now calling upon you to turn and live. But if you close your ears against his invitations and reject his offers of salvation, you must perish in your sins, and your blood will be upon your own heads.

SERMON XXI.



THE QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.



For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.—
Acts, xx. 27.



THE subject matter of all the sermons of that most eminent apostle, Paul, was, “*Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.*” He insists upon these doctrines on all occasions; and, indeed, that sermon which has not repentance, faith and regeneration for its leading topics, is scarcely worth hearing.

The conversion of sinners was the grand design of the apostle in preaching the gospel; and every faithful minister, at this day, has in view the same end. And wherever he opens his mouth, whether in public or private, repentance and faith are his themes.

Although Paul had the witness of the Holy Ghost that bonds and afflictions would attend him wherever he was called to exercise his ministry; and although he knew not what trials and difficulties would befall him at Jerusalem, yet such was his constancy and steadfastness in the cause of his master, that he is resolved that nothing shall move him. Life itself ceases to be dear to him, and he counts all things as nought, if he may finish his course with joy, and complete his ministry to divine acceptance. And, in his farewell, after assuring them that they should see his face no more in this world, he appeals to their consciences that he had faithfully discharged his duty to them as an apostle, and that he was clear of the blood of souls. He held back nothing in doctrine which could be profitable to their souls. His life was blameless and exemplary. Therefore, with a clear conscience before God and man, he calls them to witness that he was pure from the blood of all men: “*For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*” Here is expressed, in a few words, the whole duty of the minister of the gospel, viz. *to declare the whole counsel of God;* and this duty

is to be performed with faithfulness and vigilance, if he would be clear of the blood of all men.

By the counsel of God, we understand the gospel of Christ, or the revelation of his will in the gospel, which discovers to sinners their guilt and misery, their inability to rescue themselves, and unveils a glorious remedy in Christ, a plan of salvation, by the which God can be just, and justify the ungodly sinner trusting in Jesus.

The Gospel is very properly called the *counsel of God*, since it originated in wisdom eternal, and is the unalterable determination of God's will towards men, and comprehends the plan by which they may be saved. Consequently it is the minister's duty to declare faithfully *all the counsel of God*.

Then let us consider—

- I. The qualifications of a minister of the gospel.
- II. His duty. He must *declare all the counsel of God*.
- III. Apply the subject.

I. The qualifications of a minister of the gospel. And

First. It is necessary that all ministers of the gospel should be savingly converted, experimentally acquainted with the work of regeneration in their own souls. If they are ignorant of this, if they have never been born again; if they have never entered in at the strait gate of conversion, although their speculative knowledge may be great, their outward conduct and deportment spotless to the view of the world—they are still the servants of sin and bond slaves to the devil. In heart, they are enemies to Christ and his cause. Then, how is it that they can advance the glory of God, the interest of the Redeemer, and promote the salvation of dying souls? Can they travail in birth for the redemption of the people, before Christ is formed in them the hope of glory? Can they tell poor blinded sinners of the glories of Immanuel; the sweetness of his love; the joys of pardoned sin; of the unspeakable pleasure to be found in communion with God, when they are strangers to all this themselves, have neither known Christ nor beheld his glory? It is the business of the minister to direct inquiring souls who feel themselves lost, and know not what to do. They are the very persons to assist the penitent in the struggles of the new birth. Their ignorance or want of skill at this critical juncture, would forever ruin the soul. Surely the unconverted preacher cannot support the sinking sinner by showing from his own experience that his case is not singular; that all Christians have been in the same situation, when he knows nothing about it himself; or how shall he direct the unconverted in the strait or narrow way, or caution them against the dangerous resting places and legal refuges in which the Devil and his own deceitful soul would persuade them to seek safety! How shall he describe the snares

and deep pits which lie upon all sides of the narrow path, into which if the sinner should fall, he would be ruined forever, when he has never travelled in the way himself?

Secondly. As it is necessary that he should be born of God by the agency of the Holy Spirit, he should also live habitually as a scholar at the feet of Jesus, under the teachings of the Divine Spirit. This is, indeed, the common privilege of all true believers. So says the apostle: "*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;*" but it is the peculiar privilege of those that attempt to preach the gospel or declare the counsel of God. Where is his counsel revealed? In his Word. But the Word of God is a sealed book to every unconverted soul. "*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" It is true the natural man may understand the doctrines of the Bible as a science; may reason subtilely upon the most important truths; may act the critic; display his abilities with great popularity upon intricate points of divinity; and yet be as blind as a mole to the spiritual meaning of scripture. An ignorant negro who had never learned his letters, but had embraced Christ, understands it unspeakably better than the wisest man in an unregenerate state. The preacher who is not savingly converted to God must be ignorant of the spiritual meaning of the gospel, and, of course, will only preach *himself*, and not *Christ*. His aim is to shew himself the great man—the scholar, or eminent divine; not to feed the lambs of Christ; they find no spiritual food in his doctrine. He scarcely ever staggers upon their situation or touches their experience. He takes no pleasure in pointing out the Spirit's work in regeneration; he hunts not out the false resting places of the formalist; nor seeks to drive him from his refuge of lies; he never dwells upon the feelings, the exercises, the conflicts and comforts of the people of God. If he tries to preach experimentally, he goes round upon the outside of the matter, and never gets farther than the surface of vital Godliness—always treating of it in general terms.

Thirdly. It is necessary that the preacher should be called of God to the ministerial office especially. Says the apostle, "*And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*" God, by the mouth of Jeremiah, tells us why some ministers are not useful: "*I sent them not, nor commanded them; therefore, they shall not profit this people at all.*"

If a man has the witness in his own conscience, that he has never been born again, he has every reason to believe that he was never called of God. Yet it is very evident that every good man and genuine Christian, who has the witness of the Spirit in his soul, that he is born from on high, is not qualified to declare the counsel of God. None but those that are called by God

specially, as was Aaron, are qualified for the duties of the ministry. But, is it asked if this call is an audible voice from heaven? This certainly is not to be expected at this age of the church. It is not a particular impulse upon the mind to undertake this office. For this may be only a delusion of the grand deceiver of mankind. A call to the work of the ministry presupposes some clear spiritual evidences that the person is converted; that he is, in Christ Jesus, acquainted with the sweets of God's covenant. It supposes a habitual impression upon his mind of the doleful situation of sinners out of Christ, and an earnest, continual desire to warn them of their danger, and convince them, by his own experience, of the comforts of religion, of the fitness and excellency of Jesus, and his willingness to save. These things, together with the providence of God and his own exercises, shutting him up to the necessity of undertaking the work—a competent degree of natural abilities, a reasonable education, and a door open for public usefulness, is what I humbly conceive to be a call for the work of the ministry.

II. Of the duties of the minister. *He must declare all the counsel of God.*

He must use every possible means to alarm and awaken Christless sinners from their security, and bring them to a sense of their danger and guilt. He must use every argument to convince them of the horrors of an unconverted state; he must tell them the worst of their case—roar the thunders of Sinai in their ears, and flash the lightnings of Jehovah's vengeance in their faces. What says God to his messengers? "*Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.*" And who, my brethren, can avoid this duty—who that sees dying souls falling into hell by thousands can withhold his warning voice? What parent could see his house in flames, ready to fall upon his sleeping children, and not cry out with all the vehemence of affection, and use every effort to awaken and rescue them from the dreadful danger? Then, how can ministers refrain from thundering the terrors of the law? or how can they denounce its terrors in a cool, dispassionate manner, when the great majority of their congregations, and of the whole world is staggering upon the crumbling brink of hell, and daily tumbling into the eternal flames? Let them hear or not, though the world scorn and revile us, call us law preachers and madmen, Methodists—do this we must, or we will be the worst of murderers; the blood of sinners will be required at our hands—their damnation will lie at our door. In Ezekiel, we are told that "*If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.*" These are the words of God to his servant Ezekiel.

2nd. That he may *declare all the counsel of God*, the minister should try the foundation of his people's hopes, labor to drive the formalist and self-deceiver from their false refuges, and surround them upon every side, with the infallible marks of the Christian, from the word of God; use the most convincing arguments to prove them still in a state of wrath. He must plant the artillery of the law against their hopes, until, like Noah's dove, they find no resting place for their feet. And never was there a time which called more loudly than the present for the exercise of this duty. The church is crowded with lukewarm Laodiceans, *having the form of Godliness, but destitute of the vital power; on their own apprehension rich and increased in goods—in need of nothing—when they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, destitute of Christ and eternal life;* who cannot bear sound doctrine, are afraid to come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved. One calls himself a weak believer, in hopes he has a *little* grace. Another does the most he can, in hopes that Christ will *do the rest*. A third, is a poor ignorant creature; he can do nothing, but must abide God's time. A fourth has not attained the faith of assurance, but is assured that he has the faith of adherence. A fifth is a strict observer of the law—performs every known duty. Like the young man in the gospel, he says, "*All these have I observed from my youth.*" All these call themselves Christians, and are continually gaping for a comfort—looking to ministers of Christ to prophesy smooth things, to cry, *peace, peace.* They would hear the gospel preached upon legal terms. Oh, my brethren, by comforting such weak believers, or rather hypocrites, we would make their damnation sure. Says pious Erskine—

"Much rather ought we in God's name to place
His great artillery straight against their face,
And throw hot Sinai thunderbolts around,
To burn their tow'ring hopes down to the ground.
To make the pillars of their pride to shake,
And damn their doing to the burning lake.
To curse the doers unto endless thrall
That never did continne to do all."

3rd. It is his duty to direct the awakened sinner to Christ.—This is one of the most difficult parts of the minister's work, and it is ten thousand to one that he will ruin many souls, if he has not passed through the strait gate himself, if he has no experimental knowledge of the narrow way.

He must convince the awakened sinner that the vengeance of God pursues him every moment while out of Christ—that there is no safety a hair's breadth short of a sound conversion.—He must shew him the great danger of losing his convictions and

quenching the motions of the Spirit, lest his day of grace pass away, and he be given up to hardness of heart and reprobacy of mind. He should point out to the penitent all the wiles and intrigues of the Devil and his own wicked heart, designed to stifle his convictions, or settle him short of a saving faith in the Lord Jesus. He must cut off all his hopes, and reduce him to despair of salvation, save through the atonement of Christ. When sinking into despondency and the gloom of melancholy, he must encourage him, by shewing him from the word of God, and from his own experience, that his case is not hopeless; that it is in this way that the Spirit leads the soul from death unto life.—He must press home upon him the necessity of believing and flying to Jesus; the danger of lingering in conviction and waiting for qualifications to come to Christ. He must shew him that Jesus invites and entreats him to come just as he is—wretched, miserable, guilty and blind—that the most vile hell-deserving sinner would be welcome. He must point out the door of hope, and display the willingness and power of the blessed Jesus, to pardon, justify and save—acquaint him with all the promises of God's Word. And yet it is more than he dare do to speak comfort to him in his present condition. This is Christ's prerogative. All the ministers on earth could not impart to the soul one drop of spiritual comfort. False comfort they might give; but the joys of pardoned sin, or that peace in believing arising from the application of redeeming blood, are bestowed by God only. It is also necessary that we shew the awakened sinner that the benefits of the everlasting covenant are free, but that he must fly to Christ before he can enjoy them. When the penitent is released from bondage, and finds peace with God, then it is the business of the preacher to try the foundation of his hope, to distinguish between true conversion and the delusions of Satan; to undeceive him, if in an error, and if on the right foundation, to strengthen and encourage him.

4th. Another duty of the herald of the cross, is to comfort the people of God. Thus says the commandment, "*Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith my God.*" But remember that none but those who are in Christ Jesus are to be comforted. There is no comfort in all the word of God for others. It speaks to the soul out of Christ no milder language than "*Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.*" Then, lest we preach peace to the ungodly, let us carefully ascertain the Christian character, that none may mistake. Then may we freely venture to speak to the believer all the comfort contained in the book of God. Indeed I know not how we can better administer comfort to the children of God. When we describe the Spirit's work and the exercise of believers in regeneration; when we describe their exercises under a view of the

glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus; when we describe their joys in communion with God; or when we picture their feelings under the hidings of their heavenly Father's face; their desires, longings and anxieties, after the beloved of their souls; when we describe the Christian's views of the attributes of Deity, his views of Christ and of sin, and that in the most scriptural manner, the Divine Spirit shines in upon the heart, and enables the soul to see his own case described, and witness those very exercises and evidences thus drawn from the word of God—then indeed they have rational and solid foundation of comfort; then they have the witness of both the word and spirit of truth, that they are children of God, and heirs of immortal glory.

III. Apply the subject. And this we will do by showing how ministers of the gospel should declare the counsel of God, if they would be clear of the blood of souls.

1st. We must *declare all the counsel of God*. We may preach such sermons as no church judicature could condemn, and yet be as guilty of the blood of sinners, as if we preached heresy.—For instance, Sabbath after Sabbath, we may tell sinners "*they must be born again*," or *be damned*, and what will it signify? If we do not explain what conversion is, and show the exercises of the soul in passing from death to life, no one will ever be convicted. We may lay down all the marks and evidences of grace in the gospel, and if we do this in general terms, without guarding them particularly, every hypocrite and formal professor in the congregation will apply them to himself, and strengthen his false hopes for heaven.

Love to God is a sure and undoubted mark of the new creature; yet every carnal hypocrite believes that he loves God.—But, if we faithfully describe the spiritual views of the divine glory—of the beauty and excellence of the divine attributes—which precede all true love to God—this may strike some abiding conviction.

Hatred to sin is a real mark of Grace, but every formalist thinks he hates sin. But if we show from God's word, that no one has a true hatred to sin unless he has beheld the glory of God as it is in the face of Jesus—that has leaned by faith upon a crucified Redeemer—then, perhaps, the hypocrite's conscience may be touched. Then if we would be clear of the blood of all men, we must lay down in the plainest manner and in the brightest light, the evidences and characteristics of the Christian, that the hypocrite may be convinced that he is destitute of them.

2d. We must know nothing in or out of the pulpit, "*Save Jesus Christ and him crucified*." Christ crucified must be Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of every sermon. Our design in composing, studying and preaching, must be the salvation of sinners. We are not to preach *ourselves* or shew our great abili-

ties in a parade of learning. We are not to stuff our sermons with geography, philosophy—with new speculations, and curious criticisms in divinity. We must hold by the spirit of the gospel. Repentance, faith and regeneration, placed in bold relief, should be the burden of every sermon, even though they should become an old song to the carnal ear. In private, Christ should still be our theme; the vital savor of his name should hal-low every conversation.

3rd. We should declare our message in the most solemn and earnest manner, as though we believed what we said. We should be deeply affected with our subject, and use all reasonable means to affect the minds of the people—strike their judgment and their passions, and gain access to the heart by every avenue.—What judgment must the unthinking world form of the matter, when the ministers of Jesus speak of the glory of Immanuel—the dying love of a Redeemer—the joys of Heaven, with coolness and indifference? Or, when they preach of death and hell, judgment and eternity, as dispassionately as if they believed nothing about them? Surely the minister of Christ, who travails, like Paul in birth for the souls of his people, till Christ be formed in them the hope of glory; or, like Moses, stands between the living and the dead, pleading the ancient promises made to the church, must weep and groan with heartfelt sorrow over poor sinners, and warn them again and again of their danger.

4th. We must be instant in season and out of season, declar-ing all the counsel of God, if we would be pure from the blood of all men. Improve every opportunity of warning sinners to fly to Jesus. Like Paul we must be always teaching what is in Christ; wherever we are, wherever we meet our fellow crea-tures, at their houses, or on the highway, we should labor to promote their salvation, and lead them to Christ.

5th. The preacher's life should be such as to declare loudly to all men, and convince the most sceptical, that there is a living reality in his doctrine, and in the religion of Jesus Christ. His conduct and conversation should preach as loudly and as con-vincingly as his sermons.

The eyes of the world are upon all professors of religion, but particularly upon the ministers of the gospel. There is no vain word, no wrong step, no trifling gesture of all their lives, but is stained with the blood of souls; for, thereby, the ungodly con-tract a disgust for religion; the formalist and hypocrite are har-dened in their security, and very readily conclude that if they act like the minister, all is well. If he is lukewarm and formal, they will be so too; if he follow the forms and fashions of the world, so will they; if he indulge in vain company and light conversation, they will do likewise. In vain might we preach with all the ability of Paul and the eloquence of Apollos, if we

did not enforce the precepts of the gospel by the holy example of our lives. Indeed, so exemplary should the minister of the gospel be in all his conduct, that he would be above the suspicions of the wicked, or the imitation of the hypocrite. The same should be said of him as was said concerning an officer in the late war: "He has so much of the life and power of religion in all his conduct, in every place and in every company, that it is impossible for the most ingenious hypocrite to imitate him."

S E R M O N X X I I.

THE CHRISTIAN'S JOURNEY TO THE HEAVENLY CANAAN.

We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said I will give it you.—NUMBERS, x. 29.

THESE are the words of Moses, the man of God, to Hobab, his father-in-law—who is probably the same elsewhere called Jethro.

Moses was leading the chosen tribes to Canaan, the happy land, which, ages before, had been promised by the Lord to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for their posterity; and, being deeply impressed with a sense of the glorious privileges and advantages which the people of God should enjoy in that country, is induced by a sincere desire for the welfare of his father-in-law and family to entreat them to go with him to the good land and share its peculiar blessings.

The journeying of the children of Israel to the land of Canaan, forms a beautiful representation of the church of Christ travelling to the celestial kingdom of glory. And as the followers of Jesus are bound for the land of promise, and sometimes, like Moses on Pisgah's top, obtain a distant view of their heavenly inheritance, and enjoy sweet foretastes of eternal blessedness, it is not wonderful that they should with painful anxiety entreat their unconverted relations and friends to go with them to that happy country. They behold in Jesus such beauty and all-sufficiency, and have such sublime views of the indescribable blessedness of the heavenly Jerusalem, that, moved with pity and compassion towards those lying spiritually dead in the plains of Sodom, they court them in the language of Moses to Hobab: “*We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord has said, I will give it you, therefore come with us, and we will do you good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.*”

In the discussion of this subject, we shall—

- I. Describe the goodly land unto which we are journeying.
- II. Speak of the way leading thereto.
- III. Improve the subject.

I. We are to describe the goodly land unto which we are journeying.

Here we undertake a task far above the united wisdom and eloquence of men and angels. Were Gabriel to leave his shining seat in Paradise, and stand in the midst of this assembly, he could not fully describe the glory and blessedness of this country. Had I a quill, plucked from the wing of a cherub, and dipped in a ray of glory emanating from the divine throne, and were I to write for millions of ages, I should fall infinitely short of having portrayed its transcendent glory.

It is termed, “*The better country*”—“*The land of promise*”—“*A rest that remains for the people of God*”—“*A kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world*”—“*An inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*”—“*The Paradise of God*”—“*The city of God*”—“*The holy Jerusalem, having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and the building of the wall of it was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass; and the foundations of the walls of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones; and the twelve gates were twelve pearls; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass; and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*” Its blessedness is called “*an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*” Its joys, such as “*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.*” How great, indeed, must that happiness be which is even beyond the conception of the heart! Man’s lively fancy could imagine the sun to be ten thousand times more large and glorious—our earth to be a paradise, the whole atmosphere to be transparent crystal, the mountains to be solid gold, the seas and rivers to be wine, and milk and honey, and the rocks and sand to be the most brilliant diamonds—yet all these things are but dross and dung when compared with the glories of heaven.

The goodly land is a very extensive country—sufficiently large for all its blessed inhabitants. There reside all the angels and archangels, seraphim, and cherubim, and the spirits of just men made perfect; and there shall dwell the general assembly of the church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven and all the innumerable millions of the redeemed, out of every nation, and kindred and tongue, and people, upon the earth. Small, indeed, are the greatest possessions in this world: The vast conquests of Alexander; the extensive dominions of Cæsar;

sink into insignificance, when contrasted with the inheritance of the poorest inhabitant of this heavenly country, where every one is possessed of an infinite portion, even of God, with all his unbounded essence, attributes and glorious perfections.

It is a country of pure and unspotted holiness. Its air permits nothing sinful to enter there. *"And there shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."*

In this dreary wilderness, the best societies even, where the greatest power and purity of religion is enjoyed, are intermixed with bad neighbors, painted hypocrites and self-deceivers. Perhaps a communion table is never spread but a Judas sits down with the disciples of Jesus. But in the heavenly country, among the countless millions which inhabit it, there is not one unre-generated sinner.

"Sin enters not this holy place—
No tempter in this paradise:
The dwellers there are pure.
Abandoned men, that live in sin,
Nor hypocrites can enter in:
These God cannot endure."

But, as all sin is banished from this country, none of its deadly consequences are known; no tempting Devil can be found there; nor deceitful backsliding hearts; nor weeping eyes, nor pains because of the frowns of God; neither complaints of the hidings of the benign countenance of the Redeemer. No. The disciples are now in their Father's house. They are with Christ where he is, and have an uninterrupted view of his glory.

"This, this, does heaven enough afford:
They are forever with the Lord;
They want no more—for all is given:
Their father's presence makes up heaven."

It is a country of complete safety. Adam was not secure in the earthly paradise. The old serpent entered there, and robbed him and all his unborn race of innocence. The believer is not safe even in his most blessed seasons. When feasting upon the hidden manna of redeeming love; when his soul is enraptured with the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus, even then the old serpent stands, unseen, at his right hand, ready to mix gall and bitterness with his cup of consolation and rob him of his sweetest joys. Spiritual pride is secretly introduced into his heart; he grieves the Lord and provokes the withdrawal of the

Holy Spirit. Thus he is left to grovel in darkness, driven like an orphan from his father's face.

But in this goodly land, the followers of Jesus enter their Father's house, and take full possession of the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world, of that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Their fallen natures; their hard hearts and sinful propensities are left behind them and are seen no more forever. They are surrounded by the Godhead—encircled by the divine perfections, and shut up in the strong hold of eternal love. Therefore they weep, sigh, and sin no more. The Devil can neither mar their peace—nor disturb their joys—nor interrupt their blessedness throughout all eternity. *There they are clothed in white—they wear crowns of gold upon their heads—and palms of victory in their hands. They sing the new song which no man can learn but the hundred and forty-four thousand redeemed from the earth, shouting Hallelujah to God and the Lamb, crying with loud voices, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, who hath redeemed us to God by his blood out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people upon earth, and hath made us kings and priests unto God.* There they hunger and thirst no more—they are forever freed from pain and sickness and death—all tears are wiped from their eyes. They have no night, for the glory of the Lord enlightens them, and the Lamb, Christ Jesus, is the light of the place. They enjoy an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. They taste joys such as "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.*"

Now, sinners, will you not go with us to this happy country? When you remove in this world you would seek a country abounding in wealth—well watered—healthy—and whose society was agreeable and respectable. Well, my friends, the heavenly Canaan *abounds in wealth.* Its poorest citizen is a crowned head, and possesses a kingdom prepared for him from the foundation of the world. This country is the richest and most productive of all Jehovah's vast dominions: it is the garden of the universe—the paradise of God.

"There generous fruits, that never fail, on trees immortal grow,
There rocks, and hills, and brooks, and vales, with milk and honey flow."

Every part abounds with the grapes of Eschol, the apples of Paradise, with the hidden manna, the bread of life; and what surpasses all, there stands the tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruits every month, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Oh, blessed country! Oh, happy seasons? There reigns the eternal bloom of spring, the rich, unchanging luxuriance of summer. There blustering winds,

nor biting frosts, destructive rains, nor withering droughts, are ever known.

This goodly land is also *well watered*. There are the wells of salvation; the never failing springs of divine consolation; with rivers of pleasure flowing eternally at God's right hand. *A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb.*"

It is a *healthy* country; its air is pure and salubrious.

"No chilling winds, nor poisonous breath
Can reach this healthful shore;
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more."

"*The inhabitants shall not say, I am sick.*" They shall not be visited by death, nor sorrow, neither distress nor afflictions; their faces shall not wrinkle, neither shall they experience the weaknesses and infirmities of old age. But, throughout all eternity, they shall bloom with immortal youth and vigor.

The society of the goodly land is the most *respectable and agreeable* in all the universe. In every community upon earth, there are some wicked, designing men, to interrupt its harmony, and introduce disturbance. In every church are hypocrites and self-deceivers; but in the heavenly country are none, save those whose robes have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

Would you go to this blessed country, you would there associate with angels and archangels; you should enjoy the blessed society of all the ransomed millions of the Lord. You would there see Adam and Eve, Enoch, Methusalah and Noah, and all the old patriarchs who went to Paradise before the flood; there you would meet and converse with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and Moses, and Samuel and David, with all the holy kings and prophets, and other righteous men who lived in the Mosaic dispensation. There you would see the twelve apostles and all those millions converted by them and their successors in the primitive ages of the church. The martyrs who died for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus who suffered the most excruciating tortures, you shall behold near the throne, freed from all their troubles. "*They hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*" In a word, you shall see every happy soul that ever has or shall enter the pearly gates of the new Jerusalem through the blood and merits of the Son of God.

Another peculiarity of the inhabitants of the goodly land is, that they are knit together by the most pure and disinterested love. In this world, Christ's children sometimes fall out by the way; one proves a temptation to another, ungrounded suspicions arise; like Paul and Barnabas, they differ in opinions, dispute, and part to meet no more here. But in the heavenly country all disputes and suspicions are banished; the names of Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Methodist and Baptist, shall be known no more. Luther, Calvin and Zuinglius shall agree. Toplady and Wesley shall quarrel no more; but shall adore the matchless grace and the splendid glories of Jehovah; and love divine, emanating from God, will unite all together, and continually draw them nearer and nearer to Christ, their living head.

II. Speak of the way leading to the goodly land.

If you would go to the Celestial Paradise, you must start at the proper place. The road leading to the heavenly country commences at the straight gate of conversion. Hence says Christ, "*Enter ye in at the straight gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there be which go in thereat. Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*" None of Adam's posterity can take a step upon this road until they have passed through this narrow gate. Isaiah, speaking of the highway of holiness, says that *the murderer shall not pass over it; but that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*

In order to enter this strait gate, the fathomless depths of the sin and wickedness of your hearts must be laid open to your view. You must feel, to your inmost soul, your enmity to God that your whole nature is sin; the enmity of your heart must be slain by the law; dead to all hope in yourself, you must be stripped of all dependence upon your prayers, tears, resolutions or desires; you must lie at the footstool of Sovereign Mercy, throwing your guilty, perishing soul at the feet of Jesus, crying, "*Lord, save, or I perish.*" There you must wait, and seek, and strive, begging with unwearied diligence and importunity for mercy, until God, who first commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into your heart with the light of the knowledge of the divine glory in the face of Jesus—until the suitableness and sufficiency of his person and offices are revealed unto you by the Holy Spirit—until you become willing to part with all things for Christ, the pearl of great price—receive and trust him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and complete redemption.

A faith's view of the beauty, glory, and excellency of the attributes of God, meeting and harmonizing in Christ, displayed in his holy life and suffering death; It is this, I say, that attracts the heart, bows the will, allures the affections, and induces the believing sinner to fly into the outstretched arms of the Saviour,

that makes the soul thirst and pant after holiness and likeness to God, after brighter discoveries of his glory. The divine light not only reveals the loveliness of Jesus and excellencies of Deity, but also discovers the accursed nature of sin, its horrid opposition to God—shows the soul its own vileness and unworthiness; and while he feels peace, and joy that is unspeakable, he is ashamed and confounded before God; he loathes himself, and cries, with Job, "*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*"

The soul who has witnessed these things has entered the straight gate, and has just begun to walk in the way to the heavenly country; and now he feels himself weak and helpless, a child in wisdom, scarce knowing the first principles of religion; and he anxiously inquires for knowledge concerning the highway of holiness.

Would you find the way, look well for the footsteps of Jesus. Christ himself is the way. He hath sprinkled the path with his blood, and left his footsteps plain upon every part of it to direct his followers in safety; and he calls again and again to them, "*Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*" And again: "*Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*" Throughout the road he has placed beacons, lest any should mistake the way. Enoch's walking with God, the faith of Abraham, the wrestling, praying spirit of Jacob, the meekness of Moses, the patience and submission of Job, the uprightness, repentance and holy breathings of David, the heavenly temper of John, the fortitude of Paul, and many other examples, all of which stand like monuments, and point the inquiring sinner the way to the kingdom of heaven.

We shall mention some of the qualities of this way.

First, It is a *narrow way*. Such Christ declares it to be:— "*Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life.*" The road is hedged in by the law and the gospel, and is so narrow that no one can take along with him any of his beloved sins.— The fashionable vices and sinful pleasures of this world, must be left behind; and so narrow is the way, to the happy country—that even self-righteousness is excluded, and we must rely upon Christ alone for righteousness and acceptance with God.

Secondly. It is a difficult way. The apostle John, after describing the ransomed millions who had travelled in this narrow way to that happy country, tells us that they came through great tribulations, and had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The Lord Jesus Christ declares to his followers that in this world, they shall have tribulations. Says Peter, "*And if the*

righteous scarcely be saved where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Intimating that the "righteous" will be "saved" with great difficulty.

No sooner has the sinner escaped the jaws of the lion of hell and commenced walking in the "narrow way," than devils and wicked men single him out as a mark for their malice and scorn. Earth and hell combine to ensnare him and lead him into sin, that he may wound and dishonor the cause of God. And if the old serpent cannot draw him back to perdition, such is his enmity, that he will endeavor to make his way as difficult as possible. And, therefore, he will attack him through the whole journey with unabated diligence; he will assume many forms, and beset him on every side. Sometimes, as an "angel of light," he will try to delude and misguide him." He will use all the cunning of the serpent to deceive, and the rage and fury of the lion to devour him. The world presents to him a thousand bewitching allurements to captivate his affections and lead him astray from God. On every hand temptations to evil stand in thick array, ready to ensnare and prey upon his soul. But his strongest and most dangerous enemies lie deeply entrenched in his own heart—the hellish remains of indwelling sin and inbred corruption.

Against all these numerous and powerful enemies, the pilgrim bound for the heavenly Canaan must set his face like adamant; he must gird on the whole armour of God, and fight his way to his glorious inheritance. He fights the hardest upon his knees. By faithful watching and prayer, strengthened by the Lord, he is sure to triumph. Sometimes the Philistines, daily receiving recruits from hell, seem to prevail against him; his spirits sink—his strength fails, and, like David, he is ready, through unbelief, to conclude that he must fall by the hands of his enemies. When he has resisted to blood, and has fought till he can do no more than cry, "*Lord, save, or I perish,*" Jesus comes to his relief, gives new life to his soul, puts the hosts of hell to flight, and enables him to sing the conqueror's song, and rejoice in prospect of final victory.

Thirdly. It is a *pleasant way*. Saith Solomon, speaking of Wisdom, "*Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace.*" And Christ says, "*My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*" The road leading to the heavenly country is often termed a thorny way; but there is not a thorn in it, nor a briar upon the whole of it. The thorns and briars grow upon the sides of it. Snares, and pits, and quagmires, lie close to it, upon the right hand and upon the left. The weary traveller finds these thorns and briars, difficulties and troubles, only when he leaves the road. The Sun of Righteousness always shines upon the narrow path and illuminates the soul of the believer

who treads therein. Often, in the discharge of duty, the converted soul is lifted to the heavens, and catches sublime views of the glory of God. Sometimes he is low in the valley of humility; like Job, loathing himself and repenting in dust and ashes, imagines that he is the least of all saints, the meanest, vilest creature, that redeeming mercy ever plucked from the jaws of a dreadful hell. At another time he may be found panting for the presence of God, like the hunted hart for the cooling water brooks—thirsting for a sense of his love shed abroad in his heart, like a weary pilgrim in a parched land where there is no water; and, again, like a weeping Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning the spirit and temper of the inhabitants of the goodly land. Sometimes in the Lord's banqueting houses, feasting upon love; or, like Jacob, wrestling with God in spiritual prayer, calling the great Father of Truth to remember and perform his word and promise. Not unfrequently between the porch and the altar, or standing, like Moses, between the living and the dead, and pleading for the conversion and salvation of Christless sinners. Like Jeremiah, weeping and crying, “*Oh that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.*” Lying at the feet of Jesus, like the Canaanitish woman pleading for the conversion of a son or daughter, a brother or sister, or some other dear relation or friend, resolving to take no denial, but rather to change every repulse and discouraging circumstance into fresh arguments to court the mercy of heaven.

The narrow road was laid out by order of the court of heaven—planned and ordained in the early councils of eternity.—The Lord Jesus Christ came into this wretched world to open the way and make it plain. He marked it with his blood and left his footsteps to be seen through every part. The patriarchs of old, the prophets, apostles and martyrs, all travelled this narrow path, and all the ransomed of the Lord who have gone to the celestial paradise, have attained it by moving straight forward in it; and, surely, no spiritually discerning eye can mistake the way.

The soul journeying to the goodly land, though he meets many obstacles to his progress, finds the road pleasant and agreeable. He enjoys the smiles of his Heavenly Father—tastes the riches of his grace, and often feels his love shed abroad in his heart. He is consoled in all his troubles by a sense of the protection of the Almighty, who has promised to be his strong tower and defence, his strength in weakness, his helper in distress, his righteousness and his everlasting all.—*Lest any should stray, the Lord Jesus goes before his faithful*

followers, in a pillar of a cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. He feasts their souls upon the rich blessings of the everlasting covenant, and takes them into sweet communion with himself. And when they have come to the end of the way, and have to encounter Death, their last enemy, they need not fear; he has been conquered; Jesus has invaded his dread territories and defeated him, and, as a trophy of victory, hath led him in chains, and robbed him of all his terrors. Now, instead of the grim monster and terrible enemy, he appears their friend—a messenger of peace to convey poor exiles home to glory. Stop for a moment! See the dying Christian parting with time—bidding adieu to this world. Heaven opens, and immortal joy beams into his soul, and he willingly resigns himself into the keeping of his Redeemer, singing a song like this:

“When death appears before my sight
 In all his dire array,
 Unequal to the dreadful fight,
 My courage dies away.

But, see my glorious leader nigh—
 My Lord, my Savior lives;
 Before him death’s pale terrors fly,
 And my faint heart revives.

He left his dazzling throne above,
 He met the tyrant’s dart,
 And, oh! amazing power of love,
 Received it in his heart.

No more, oh, grim destroyer, boast
 Thy universal sway;
 To heaven-born souls thy sting is lost,
 Thy night is turned to day.

Lord I commit my soul to thee;
 Accept the sacred trust;
 Receive this noble part of me,
 And watch my sleeping dust.

Till that illustrious morning come,
 When all the saints shall rise,
 And, clothed in full immortal bloom,
 Attend thee to the skies.”

But, oh! the joy unspeakable, the floods of glory, that deluge the soul when it parts from the body. The cage is opened, and the spirit is liberated from *this* heavy clog of clay. The angel bands draw near; bright shining seraphs surround it on every

side, and, perhaps, the departed souls of their Christian friends, who were their companions, sat under the same sermons, underwent the same difficulties, and enjoyed the same pleasures, join to conduct them to their Father's house.

But who can describe the happiness of the soul when conveyed by the celestial host? He rises from the earth—soars aloft in the heavens, leaves sun, moon and stars far behind, and beholds the resplendent glories of the new Jerusalem, whose pearly gates fly open wide to receive him. He enters the city of God, welcomed by all the redeemed of the Lord, and embraced in the arms of Jesus. With propriety, the lines of the seraphic poet may be accommodated to this subject:

And now by swift degrees,
They sail aloft through azure seas;
Now tread the milky way.
Farewell ye planets in your spheres;
And as the stars are lost a brighter sky appears.
In haste for Paradise,
They sketch the pinions of a bolder thought.
Scarce had they willed but they were past
Deserts of trackless light, and all the Eterial waste,
And to the sacred borders brought.
With pleasing reverence they behold
The pearly portals—spires of gold.
Noon stands eternal there; and there their sight
Drink in the rays of primogenial light.
They breathe immortal air;
Joy beats high in every vein;
Pleasure through all their bosoms reign.
The laws forbid the stranger pain,
And banish every care.
They view the bubbling streams of love
Beneath the throne arise;
The streams in crystal channels move,
Around the golden streets they rove,
And bless the mansions of the upper skies.

What must be the soul's joyous surprise when he finds himself in heaven?

And is this heaven—and am I here?
How short the road—how swift the flight!
I am all life—all eye—all ear:
Jesus is here my soul's delight.

Is this the heavenly friend that hung
In blood and anguish on the tree?
Whom Paul proclaimed—whom David sung—
Who died for them—who died for me?

How fair thou offspring of my God!
Thou first-born image of his face,
Thy death procured this blessed abode;
Thy vital beams adorn the place.

Is it possible I am here? Are my doubts, and fears, and painful conflicts all over? Shall I behold this lovely precious Jesus, through all eternity, face to face, without a dimming veil between? Do I hear the shouts of the redeemed? Is it the songs of adoring angels—the loud hallelujahs of the armies of heaven that strike my ears? Oh, what glory dazzles my eyes and enraptures my heart! What floods of blessedness overwhelm my soul! I am lost in joy and wonder—in adoration, love and praise.

III. Improve the subject.

We have attempted a description of this country, and have spoken of the way leading thereto. We have seen that it is a holy and pure land abounding in every thing that is desirable; that the road though narrow and difficult, is yet pleasant and agreeable. And now, sinner, will you not go with us to this country. *“We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord has said, I will give it you.” “Come and go with us, we will do you good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.”* The terms upon which you shall possess an inheritance in this country are easy and very reasonable. Repent of your sins, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and walk in all his statutes blameless, and you shall obtain the kingdom. Come unto the Lord just as you are—poor and vile, needy and dependent, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and you *“shall be filled,”* you shall obtain pardon of sin, and peace and reconciliation to God.

Come with us, and we will do you good. Yes, we will do all that feeble ministers and people can do for you. We will instruct you in the paths of holiness; we will tell you what we have felt, and seen, and know; that Jesus is precious; that he is a glorious, almighty, all sufficient, and willing Saviour; we will bear your case to a throne of grace; we will plead for your conversion and complete salvation in the name of Jesus; we will entreat God on your behalf; we will take you by the hand and try to lead you in the footsteps of Jesus, and show you the dangers and snares that lie thick upon each side of the way; we will hold up to your view the offers of the gospel, and show you the willingness of Christ to receive poor, repenting, returning prodigals, and all the rich and unbounded fullness of the Eternal Covenant of Peace. *“The Lord has spoken good concerning Israel.”* These words, give to poor lost sinners the greatest encouragement to enlist under Christ’s royal banner, and journey in haste to the glorious land. They shall become interested in all the privileges of the children of God—shall partake of all their heavenly joys and com-

forts; shall share in their eternal and unspeakable felicity which awaits them in the celestial paradise of God. “*The Lord has spoken good concerning Israel.*” What “good” hath he spoken? He declared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, by his word and covenant, by his solemn oath, that their offspring should possess the land of Canaan. In like manner he hath pledged to Jesus Christ that all his spiritual seed—all the purchase of his blood shall inherit the heavenly Canaan with all its ineffable glories and blessedness. Jesus prayed for it—he asked it upon the principles of law and justice; upon the conditions of his mediation and atonement, viz. that all those which the Father had given him should be with him and where he is, and behold his glory; and, therefore he tells them, “*In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.*”

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SERMON XXIII.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT DISTINGUISHED FROM THAT OF THE DEVIL.

“For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.”

MARK, xiii. 22.

In this chapter, our Lord speaks particularly of the destruction of Jerusalem, which was just at hand, when God's vindictive wrath should be poured out upon the hardened and impenitent Jews, because of their manifold wickedness and rebellion, in rejecting their day of merciful visitation; having crucified the Son of God, saying—“*His blood be on us and on our children.*”

We think with the wisest and most learned of our commentators, that our Lord's predictions respecting these dreadful events have a two-fold application. First, to the overthrow of Jerusalem, and second, to the tremendous occurrences which shall take place prior to the end of the world. The signs of the times, the dreadful forebodings, which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, and those which shall precede the end of the world, are much of the same character. In the text, we have one of those omens of ill, which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, and which will certainly occur before the end of time. “*False Christs, and false prophets, shall rise and shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.*”

By “false Christs,” were meant Barcochab and other impostors, who arose among the Jews, and feigned themselves Christ, the promised Messiah. And from the text it is evident, that such deceivers are to be expected in the last ages. Many have appeared already, and others will appear; and without doubt, the false doctrines, the fatal delusions, and destructive schisms, which prevail in the present day; the great light so much boasted of, and the pretensions that the millennium has, even now, commenced, are in part a fulfilment of this awful prediction.

It is foreign from our present purpose, to enter the lists for controversy, or to investigate any particular system of errors now existing. We shall, therefore, in a practical and experimental manner, consider some of the subtle stratagems and devices of that Old Serpent, the Devil, by which he imitates the character of the true Christ, seduces immortal souls, and cheats them out of salvation.

The grand design of the Old Serpent, in tempting to sin—his great object in raising up impostors and deceivers—introducing false religion and false worship—in deluging the earth with heresies and delusions—is the everlasting perdition of the souls of men and women; and the method of all others, most efficient in accomplishing this infernal purpose, is raising up false Christs, and counterfeiting or producing something, that bears a plausible resemblance to the glorious works and operations of the Holy Spirit.

This will appear manifest, if we take a short and summary view of the history of the Church from the commencement of time.

When God instituted bloody sacrifices in the early dispensations, to lead his prophets, to see the complete satisfaction which Christ should make to the law and justice of God, by the sacrifice of himself, the Devil speedily introduced the same custom throughout the Pagan world. When the true God established an order of Priesthood for the pure administration of his worship, and to point typically to Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest, who was to offer the all-atoning sacrifice to appease the vengeance of Jehovah, immediately the Devil appoints priests for every idol temple and false God. When the true God calls and ordains prophets to reveal his will to man, and foretell future events, soon the Devil raises up “false prophets” among them in abundance.

When the true God, under the Mosaic dispensation, establishes an oracle to give answer to important inquiries, which concerned the welfare of his church and people, the Jews, the Devil imitates this by the oracles at Delphos, Dodona and other places.

No sooner does God, by his servant Moses, work miracles in Egypt before Pharaoh, than the Devil, to counteract his purposes, by his agents attempts the performance of the same miracles.

Inspect the history of the Christian Church, and you will find that every corruption, every heresy and delusion, and every fatal measure, by which the Old Serpent has adulterated pure religion, has been introduced under the pretext of piety and holiness. The superstitious austerity of the monks and nuns was introduced as an entire denial of the vanities and pleasures of the world, and complete devotedness to God. Persecution was

admitted under the flattering appearance of zeal for God and the purity of the gospel; heresies and false doctrines, under the pretext of new light, and for insight into the truths of the gospel; dull formality, under a cloak of zeal for sound doctrine, an adherence to the precepts of the gospel; and wild enthusiasm under the fair shew of the life and power of religion.

It is evident from the word of God, that the Devil often counterfeits the internal operations of the Spirit of Christ; "*For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*" And from scripture it may be reasonably inferred, that there are false hopes, false joys, and comforts—false zeal and delight in the ordinances of God, which prove the great subtlety and ingenuity of the Devil in imitating Christ and counterfeiting his works.

The phrase "*false Christs*" suggests two ideas worthy of attention.—First that they have a counterfeit resemblance to the true Christ, that their deceptions and delusions are very plausible, subtle, and ingenious,—and so strongly resemble the reality of religion—its life and power—that it is often difficult to distinguish the true from the false. "*False Christs and false prophets, shall rise and shew signs and wonders.*" Second, that there are persons whom false Christs cannot finally deceive, whom the Devil cannot cheat out of salvation, viz. the elect; and therefore I conclude, they cannot fall from grace. "*To seduce, if it were possible, even the elect*" implies in the strongest terms, its impossibility.

To declare that there is in the world a people called the elect, that their salvation is inevitably certain, that no "*false Christs*" can deceive them, is so offensive to some, that it is sufficient to destroy the character and usefulness of the most faithful ministers of Jesus Christ. There are many calling themselves the humble followers of Jesus Christ, who if they hear the words elect, election, or predestination mentioned in the pulpit, permit resentment to rise, and their hearts to boil with madness, and reject the sermon *en masse*.

And if they speak of it, it is with rancor and bitterness; not in the spirit of Christ, but in their own spirit—although these terms are scriptural—used by the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul.—Says Christ, "*Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?*" "*But for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.*" "*Then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of heaven.*"

Would you know who are the elect, Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul can best answer. The former says they are a people whom his Father "*giveth*" him. "*All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me.*" Addressing the Father, he says, "*Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. I have manifested thy name unto the m*

which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word. Father, I will that by thyself, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." Saith Paul, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame, before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. Moreover whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified; and whom he justified them he also glorified."

These things I read in my Bible, and I have no authority to take them out. Some people tell us, this doctrine is from hell; if so, the Bible is from hell, for it is full of it.

In discussing this subject further, we shall attempt—

I. To shew with what ingenuity the Devil imitates the true Christ, and the operations of his Spirit in regeneration and sanctification.

II. We shall distinguish the operations of the Spirit of God, from the artful deceptions of the Devil.

III. Make some application.

I. We are to shew with what ingenuity the Devil imitates the true Christ, and the operations of his Spirit in regeneration and sanctification. But before we enter upon the discussion of the subject, we would make a few preparatory remarks for the better understanding of the doctrine.

1st. The Devil is an intelligent spirit, possessing more wisdom, perhaps, than all the human race collectively; and, since he has had near six thousand years experience in tempting human nature, he must be perfectly acquainted with the constitution, the temper and disposition of every individual of Adam's family.—And knows well how to bring his infernal schemes to bear upon the human mind. In acting the false Christ, he accomplished his hellish purposes, by merely counterfeiting the operations of the Holy Spirit, and thus finally deceives the soul, or induces those under the operations of the Divine Spirit, to stop short of a sound conversion; some taking their convictions for Christ—some their bodily agitations—others their enlargements in prayer, their tears and melting frames. He deludes others, almost christians, just coming to the new birth, by presenting some phantom or delusion to the mind, which it embraces, instead of Christ, and they are thus forever shipwrecked and lost. But to proceed to the illustration of the doctrine.

When the Lord Jesus Christ works with power upon the heart, and effects the new creation in the soul; he who is the subject of this great work, can give a rational and scriptural account of the matter. He can tell that the Spirit of God arrested him while in his career to hell. He can point to the solemn sermon, or dispensation of Divine Providence, by which he was

alarmed and awakened to his dreadful danger, while out of Christ. He can tell that he was led by the Lord, who laid his heart open to his view, and enabled him to see and feel that his whole nature was sin, and his heart enmity against God; that, slain by the law, and dead to all hope in himself, he lay at the feet of Jesus, crying, Lord, save or I perish. He can tell, that in this most hopeless and desperate time, Christ appeared for his deliverance; that the glorious plan of his salvation was unfolded to his view, and by faith he beheld the glory, beauty, fulness, sufficiency, and willingness of Jesus to save; that his heart acquiesced in the new covenant; that the burden of sin and guilt was removed, and "*the peace of God, which passeth all understanding*" filled his whole soul. This every genuine christian can do in some degree.

The Psalmist cries out; "*Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul:*" and often does he tell of the great things which the Lord hath done for him.— "*He brought me up also, out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto God. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath the Lord removed our transgressions from us.*"

The apostle Paul at different times, tells of the great things the Lord has done for his soul, giving a particular narration of his conversion. And this was undoubtedly the practice of the primitive church in the days of the apostles; for Peter directs all christians to be ever ready to give a reason for the hope that is within them.

But such is the craft and subtlety of the old Serpent, and so ingeniously does he counterfeit the operations of the Spirit of Christ, that the deceived hypocrite can give a relation of his experience, so rational and plausible, that it is difficult to distinguish it from that of the genuine christian. When he speaks of his awakening and conviction of sin, his exercises go hand in hand with those of the child of God. He goes through a preparatory law-work, until he comes to the very point of closing with Christ; and when he tells of his joys and his comforts, which he has mistaken for conversion, perhaps the most discerning minister of Christ, the most sharpsighted christian on earth, cannot shew where the deception lies.

2nd. The true christian, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, at his conversion, and at many blessed seasons afterwards, when he gets near to God, is filled with "*joy unspeakable and full of glory*," and is constrained to praise and glorify God. Now, this is not at all astonishing; for when a poor, guilty, despairing, dying sinner, feels himself plucked as a brand from the burning—escaped from the jaws of gaping hell, like a bird from the fowler's snare;—when he views the glory of God in the face of

Jesus, and his soul is enraptured with the beauties of Immanuel, while the love of God is shed abroad in his heart:—it is nothing strange, I say, for him to rejoice and shout aloud, and exceed the bounds of what the world calls order.

David rejoiced and praised God.—“*Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.*” The eunuch “*went on his way rejoicing.*” The Jailor “*rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house.*” The Spirit declares expressly, that peace and joy are the consequences of the pardoning love of God.—“*Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also, we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*”

But the Devil, acting the false Christ, can very ingeniously counterfeit the sweet joy and comforts of the justified soul: so that the deceived hypocrite may have something which seems nearly to resemble them. The scripture speaks of such joy.—“*He that receiveth the word into stoney places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it.*” The children of Israel, at the Red Sea, publicly rejoiced and praised God with songs and instruments of music; but we are told they soon forgot his works.

The poor sinner who has had alarming views of his misery and danger—who has felt himself suspended over the bottomless pit of hell, and has embraced a phantom instead of Christ, thinks all well, supposing that he has escaped everlasting ruin—and that heaven and eternal life are sure. Therefore, he feels happy, and shouts for joy. He feels a flow of affection too, which bears a great resemblance to the love of the heaven-born convert; but if searched to the bottom, it will be found to have no higher principle than self for its foundation. The beauties of Immanuel, the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus, the infinite excellencies and attributes of the Deity are, to him, dark and profound mysteries. He loves God because he thinks he will take him to heaven. He loves Christ for his benefits and not for the perfections of his person.

In this dreadful state, are many who have stopped short of genuine religion, and are now rejoicing in prospect of heaven and immortal glory, and will perhaps not be undeceived until they fall into the flames of hell.

3rd. Sometimes the children of God when first converted, and not unfrequently afterwards, are the subjects of great bodily agitations. Here we would remark, that mankind are apt to run into extremes upon this subject—contending that all bodily exercises in religion are the delusive effects of diabolical agency, or that they are the evidences of a gracious work. And there

are not a few, who suppose that the Spirit of God can be in no public assembly, unless there are bodily agitations. Now, both of these opinions are erroneous; for although bodily exercises are no evidence of grace, nor at the same time, a proof of the want of it, it is very clear, that they are sometimes the effects of the mighty power of God.—And yet we know the Devil is capable of imitating this work.

It is true, that thousands of God's dear children have had uncommon bodily agitations, but yet have enjoyed sweet fellowship and communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ; and the word of God goes to shew that many eminent saints may be included in the number. Habakkuk speaks of his bodily strength being so overcome by the majesty of God, that his "*belly trembled*," and his lips "*quivered at the voice*." Says the Psalmist, "*my flesh trembleth for fear of thee*." Elsewhere he speaks of his heart and flesh crying out for the living God, and of his flesh longing for the presence of the Lord. The prophet Daniel, in giving an account of an extraordinary manifestation of the divine glory says, "*There remained no strength in me, for my comeliness was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength*." John, under a similar manifestation of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, tells us, that he fell at his feet as one dead. The circumstance of Paul in his journey to Damascus, and other examples, might be produced, which prove beyond the shadow of a doubt, that bodily exercises are often the effects of the mighty power of God.

But, as the Old Serpent imitated the miracles of Moses in Egypt, and counterfeits the more refined spiritual exercises of the mind, there is no doubt of his producing every species of agitations of the body. History informs us, that Pythia, the priestess, who delivered the oracles of Apollo, in the ancient ages of the pagan world, that before she gave answers to impatient inquirers, she would fall down and foam and roll in tremendous convulsions. And by historians who have traveled through the north western parts of the American continent, and have been present when the Indians were engaged in their conjurations, we are told that the persons acting as their priests, would suddenly fall down as if dead, and remain in that situation for a long time. If this be a fact, the Devil at the present day produces the same effects upon the bodies of men.

There is no doubt from scripture, but the people of God may be filled with overpowering views of divine glory, and with sweet sensations of love to God, be constrained to leap and rejoice, and shout aloud with vehemence.—And at the same time, I believe that the Old Serpent, may fill the deceived soul so full of false joy as to produce a like effect. But often the hypocrite is prompted by spiritual pride to shout in order to be noticed,

esteemed and admired, by the people of God for his piety and holiness.

4th. The soul that is converted and renewed by the Spirit of God, often feels an unspeakable pleasure in drawing near to the Lord in the ordinances of his house. It is very manifest that it is the nature of grace, or spiritual life, in the soul, to lead the people of God to delight in his appointments, and to spend much time in hearing the gospel and attending on sacramental solemnities, as well as praying and singing the praises of God. Anna, the prophetess, "*departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayer, day and night.*" The primitive christians in Jerusalem *continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God.* Daniel delighted in prayer, and solemnly attended to it three times a day. Divine grace inclines the people of God to delight in praising his name.—"*Praise ye the Lord; praise him, O ye servants of the Lord: sing praises to his name, for it is pleasant.*" "*Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises to our God.*" They also delight in the preaching of the word. The gospel of Christ is a joyful sound to them. "*Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound.*" David declares, "*I will wash my hands in innocency; so will I compass thine altar, O Lord, that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.*" "*Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.*" "*One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.*" "*How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord.*"

The experience of every heaven-born soul can witness the truth of these things. But such is the ingenuity of the Devil, that he can imitate them also. The poor deceived hypocrite may spend much time in the duties of religion, and that too with great zeal and diligence; and even with pleasure and delight. This was the case with the hypocritical Jews of old, whose services were abominable unto God. Saith he, "*Your new moons, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you, yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood.*" Such was the case also, with the Pharisees. They made long prayers, and fasted twice a week. As has been said, deceived hypocrites may not only be diligent and earnest in their attendance on the means of grace, but may also take delight in the duties and ordinances of God's house. This is plain from high author-

ity. “*They seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of God.*” “*They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit down before thee, as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not.*” Herod heard John the Baptist *gladly*, and of others of his hearers we are told, that for a season they rejoiced in his light; and the stoney ground hearers also received the word with joy.

5th. Passages of scripture are frequently brought to the hearts of true believers, by the Spirit of God, with great light and clearness. The Bible is the great store house where their treasures lie. When Christ speaks peace and comfort to their souls, it is often through the medium of the written word. Sometimes a precious text of scripture opened to their view, is the means by which Jesus first reveals to them his love. This seems to have been the case with David.—“*Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*” And they always meet with Christ, when by faith, they rely upon the sweet promises of his word.

But in this instance the Devil exerts his usual ingenuity. He often suggests his fatal deceptions to the mind by texts of scripture. When he had the daring impudence to quote scripture to the Son of God, to deceive and tempt him to sin, and when he so often counterfeits the operations of the Holy Spirit; is it no matter of surprise that he should use the same means to deceive poor sinful worms of the dust?

6th. When the true believer meets with Jesus and feels the witness of the pardoning love of God, his lips are opened and his tongue loosed, not only to praise and glorify the Lord, but also, to converse with great liberty, fervency and animation, upon the divine realities of religion—to exhort and warn their fellow creatures of their guilt and danger. When the humble christian meets his Redeemer, he feels that his love is sweeter than life. The scriptures unfold their blessed realities.—Eternity and eternal things are discovered to him in all their dreadful and solemn importance. The glory, beauty, fullness, and preciousness of Jesus enrapture his soul. His heart is inflamed, his tongue is loosed, and he speaks the language of Paradise. He tells of the wonders of Immanuel, and his blessed hopes of eternal life. With importunity, he warns sinners of impending wrath, and entreats them to seek salvation. He tells them of the boundless sufficiency of Christ, and his gracious willingness to receive the chief of sinners: and the truth of all he speaks is felt in his very inmost soul.

But, alas! the Devil has a counterfeit for this too. With what warmth and animation, could many, who are now immersed in the delusion of Shakerism, talk of Christ and heaven, and all the glorious realities of religion. Recur to the dreadful example of Judas, Desus, Philetus, and many others, once great professors and ministers of the gospel, but who turned back, and demonstrated to the world that they were strangers to Christ, and knew nothing of the blessed realities of religion. How many such instances have occurred in every age of the church, and alas! how many persons have we known, who, during the late revival, made a flaming profession of religion, prayed and exhorted with great life and surprising vehemence, but who are now careless, prayerless and profane, giving the most dreadful evidence that their natures were never changed—their hearts never right with God.

7th. It is a glorious privilege of the people of God to obtain clear assurances of their union with Christ. Many true believers in all ages, have attained to an unshaken confidence of an everlasting happiness. With language of the strongest assurance, Job speaks of his interest in the love and favor of God.—“*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms shall destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; when I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another.*” With the same confidence he declares—“*Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart fainteth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*”

The Lord Jesus in his last conversation with his disciples, before his crucifixion, in plain terms, assures them of his everlasting love. Paul, throughout his epistles, speaks with unshaken confidence of his eternal happiness.—“*For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*” “*For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ; which is far better.*” “*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only but unto all them that love his appearing.*”

And I humbly trust the experience of many of the Lord’s children, at the present day, can abundantly testify that a blessed assurance of heaven and eternal life, may be attained by all who press after it with unwearied diligence.

But the subtle, arch-fiend of hell, in this instance displays the same ingenuity. Many poor deceived souls have a delusive hope of heaven and everlasting happiness, as immovable as a mountain, so firm, that nought but the flames of hell can shake it. How unshaken was the Pharisee’s hope, when in the language of boasting he could say, “*God, I thank thee, that I am not as oth-*

er men." And are there not many going with the same false hope to the judgment bar?

An old grey headed man, just on the brink of eternity, once told his experience, expressing an unshaken hope of heaven and eternal bliss; though at the same time, in a state of intoxication, and a short time before, in a bloody rage, had shot one of his neighbors through the body, the wound fortunately not proving mortal.

Our subject is awful and momentous, but so copious, that time will not permit to do it ample justice. But upon the whole, such is the wisdom, the craft, the subtlety, and ingenuity, of that Old Serpent, the Devil, and such his desire to deceive and destroy the human race, that he is always engaged with unwearied diligence, in counterfeiting every operation and every grace of the divine Spirit: and every member and feature of the new creature. Hence, faith, repentance, love to God, and communion with him, zeal, pure religion, self-denial, and holy obedience, have imitations which as nearly resemble them, as counterfeit money the pure coin.

But, says some poor deluded soul, I know that I love God—that I love Christ and cannot be deceived; for the Devil can neither love, nor counterfeit love to God. My dear friend, you are under a fatal mistake. It is a fact, that the Old Serpent cannot produce true love to the true God and to the true Christ, but he can raise an imaginary God, and imaginary Christ, which presented to the mind, may influence you to love the image, and fill you with rapturous joy and comfort.

The drunken, blasphemous deist may love his imaginary God—a being so great, so highly exalted, that he takes no notice of the wicked actions of men. The careless sinner loves *his* God—a being all goodness and mercy—that will overlook and forgive all his wickedness, and take him to heaven when he dies. And when the ingenuity of the Devil invents a God or Christ, much more refined and captivating than either of these, the deceived hypocrite may be enraptured with love for it, and constrained to leap and shout for joy.

But by this time, some perhaps are saying this doctrine is wrong, for it leaves no foundation for the christian. I know that my experience is right—this cuts it off; and therefore, that doctrine must be wrong. Poor soul, you are the very deceived creature, we have been seeking. You are on terms with the Devil, and are opening the door of your heart for the false Christ; you say, your experience is founded on the Bible; that which holds up your experience is the truth; what bears hard upon it—is all wrong. The Devil asks no better chance than that which you afford him, to cheat you out of your soul.

But, methinks the honest humble christian all this while, is

asking himself, what shall I do? Where the evidences of the christian are laid down, I dare not refuse to witness them. But where the counterfeits and deceptions of the Old Serpent are stated, I fall into awful doubts. Lord search me, and try me.—If I am deceived, Lord undeceive me—shew me my error.

And if it be so that the delusions of the Devil are so subtle and ingenious, pray sir, state some of the evidences of grace—some of the works of the Spirit, by which the true christian may be distinguished from the self-deceiver and hypocrite?

We will comply with your request, for we promised—

II. To distinguish the operations of the Spirit of God, from the artful deceptions of the Devil.

Under the operations of the Divine Spirit, the genuine christian is—

1st. *A new creature*; the subject of a saving change of nature. “*If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.*” “*We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.*”

Religion is simply a change of nature, and consists in holy principles, holy dispositions, and holy views; and these are productive of a godly life and conversation. Hence, in scripture the true christian is said, *to bear the image of Christ—to be a partaker of the divine nature—to have the same mind that was in Jesus—and that his soul and body are the temple of the Holy Ghost.*

In regeneration, his convictions of sin are deep and thorough, yet rational and scriptural. As the word of God expresses it, *The fallow ground of his heart is broken up*; the hands of divine vengeance wound his soul to the bottom; the sins of his life—the sins of his heart—the sins of his best duties—the total depravity of his nature—the dreadful extent and deep malignity of unbelief—are laid open to his view. The law comes to his heart with convincing light and power. Upon rational principles he sees and feels himself a sinner; he sees the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and feels his utter inability, to keep the commandments of God, to believe in Christ, to think a good thought, or command one holy desire or pious affection. He becomes dead to the law, every hope gives up the ghost, and he can only plead guilty, guilty, before God.

In this way Christ brings about the new creation; and in this way the sinner is brought from death unto life, his hopes, his joys, his comforts, and the first motions of a spiritual life in the soul, arise from a true discovery of the intrinsic excellence and glory of the moral perfections of God, manifested in the life, the obedience, the death, and atonement of the God-man, Christ Jesus. This is evidently declared by the Spirit.—“*For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,*

to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” “But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

The divine spirit enlightens his mind through the medium of his precious word, to have the most just and correct views of the holy nature and infinite perfections of God. He beholds his spotless holiness, his unbending justice, his boundless love, and imperishable goodness and mercy. He sees a glorious lustre and beauty in the perfect law-fulfilling righteousness and atonement of Jesus Christ. The plan by which God can be just, and the justifier of sinners who call on Jesus, appears plain and easy to his understanding. He sees that all his abominable sin and guilt, can, upon principles of justice, be pardoned, and the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to him for his justification.

The poor believing sinner may now be said to have come to his right mind or proper senses; and he sees all things, in some degree, as they are. He sees them in the light of the Spirit which shines into his mind. His heart and affections are drawn to love God upon rational and scriptural principles. He loves *him* from a spiritual knowledge of the amiable excellence of his nature and perfections. He loves *holiness* because of its intrinsic beauty and loveliness. He loves the *law* of God, because it is the transcript of his moral perfections. He loves the *written word*, because it is the mirror in which he beholds his Father's face, the medium through which he sees his heavenly inheritance, and enjoys sweet foretastes of eternal bliss.

2nd. Another distinguishing peculiarity of the genuine christian, is *humility*. This is one of the most amiable graces of the new creature, and one of the most prominent evidences of the reality of spiritual life in the soul. Now, humility is one of the secrets of the new covenant. Like the “*white stone*,” on which was written *a new name, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.*

There are many professors of religion, who tell us many things concerning their great light, their joys, and large attainments in the divine life. They have passed by old experienced christians, and faithful ministers of Christ, and left them far behind. *They* are exactly right, and all the world besides are wrong. They are always teaching and never learning. But no one ever hears them lamenting over the wickedness of their hearts, or asking questions for their information upon the important matters of the soul. Indeed, there is nothing about them which wears the appearance of great humility, which proves very clearly that all their religion is deception.

Many professing christians have no other ideas of humility than those of a *plain old fashioned dress, awkward manners, and*

cheap homely diet; and pride, the opposite of humility, with them, consists in *vain, gaudy attire*, and the *superfluous ornaments* of giddy youth. When they speak of the nature of pride, all you hear about the matter is, *rings, ribands, ruffles* and *trinkets*. But these are only some of the little top-twigs of the tree: the root lies deep, in the very bottom of the heart.

The humble christian, who knows himself, and sees the secrets of his heart, has ideas of humility, and views of pride widely different. *His* humility is one of the immediate effects of his first view of the glory of God in Christ Jesus. All his bitter convictions, the thunders of the law, and tormenting fears of hell, could not humble his proud heart. He never felt the smallest symptom of humility until the Spirit of God opened the eyes of his understanding to behold the divine glory shining in the face of Christ. It was a faith's view of this glory, and the pardoning love and mercy of God, which broke his proud heart, and humbled him at the feet of Jesus. Even while he felt the sweetest sensations of love, and beheld the dawning of heaven on earthly ground, he was ashamed and confounded before God, and wept and mourned with heart-melting sorrow and distress. O how unworthy and mean—how filthy and abominable, did he appear to himself. And he could scarcely forgive himself, even when he felt the witness of the forgiving love of God. This is well expressed in the exercises of Job—“*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*”

Whenever the genuine christian gets near to God, the same light by which he discovers the excellencies of the nature and perfections of God, the beauty and glory of Christ, and the spiritual meaning of the written word, also enables him to discover his own sinfulness and unworthiness; and he is struck with wonder that the condescension of God should be extended to such a worm of the dust. In his own sight, he is the meanest of all the ransomed of the Lord—the greatest wonder of redeeming grace. The more he knows of God, and the more he sees of himself, the humbler he lies in the dust; the more he complains of his want of humility. In every situation, spiritual pride is the plague and torment of his soul: it seems to pollute all that he does.

When he prays with life and zeal, pride whispers, well done. This confounds the honest soul; and if he begins to tell his complaints to one of his fellow creatures, pride is mingling itself with his tears, and ere he is aware, is shewing its hellish face through his groans and complaints. Again, when he getshappy in the public congregation, and rejoices and praises God, pride whispers, well done. The people of God will esteem you, and admire your zeal and attainments in religion. Now, this makes

him loathe and hate himself; and run again and again to the blood of Christ for pardon and deliverance. In short, day by day, he sees so much ignorance, weakness and self-righteousness—so much pride, hypocrisy and unbelief mixed with all he does—that he feels himself the least of all saints, the meanest that ever tasted the love of Jesus.

3rd. Another peculiarity which distinguishes the genuine christian, is, his *spiritual warfare*. The continual conflict which is carried on between grace and corruption—between the heaven-born principle of life in the soul, and the old nature, at length terminates in the final victory of grace, when justification is complete and the soul ripe for glory.

Here we will observe, that there is a war between the unrenewed will, and the enlightened conscience, which, perhaps, the deceived hypocrite mistakes for conversion. The christian's warfare is essentially different from this. Many profess christianity and have no warfare. These are deceived hypocrites.

It might be supposed from the conduct of many professors, that the greater part of the divine law was repealed—that spiritual pride and self-righteousness were no longer sinful or offensive to God. And it might well be supposed from their conduct, that pride, self-righteousness, and a legal spirit were terms of which they had never heard. Such christians have all their religion at meetings and public assemblies. They often appear very happy, and can pray, and rejoice, and shout; but at home they neglect family and secret prayer, and spend many Sabbaths in vain conversation. See them at home in the week—the world has all their thoughts, and is the only subject of conversation: when from public worship you can scarce distinguish them from the moral part of the unconverted world.

All the spiritual warfare of such professors is not with the sins of their own hearts—their perverse wills and unsanctified natures—but with the sins of their neighbors—with the principles and conduct of those who belong to other denominations. They are never heard bewailing the desperate wickedness of their own hearts—never seen weeping over their hardness and unbelief.

But the living christian stands day by day upon the field of battle; his worst enemies lie deeply entrenched in his own heart. The more he beholds of the divine glory in the face of Jesus—the more he discovers of the purity and holiness of the law of God—the better does he see the depravity of his own nature. The blindness of his mind—the hardness of his heart—his worldly-mindedness and unbelief—the vain thoughts and the wandering imaginations of his heart, are by him regarded as cruel enemies, which injure his peace and debar his soul from

full communion with his Heavenly Father. Yet, he can appeal to God in his darkest moments, that he hates these things, and they are his grief and burden; and he feels that heaven would be no heaven to him unless delivered from all sin. Therefore, the death of all sin, of every sin, is his object. The employment every day of his life, is the cutting off and plucking out his dearest sins—crucifying "*the flesh with the affections and lusts.*" He has ten thousand times more to do with the secret and hidden evils of his own heart, than with the sins of his neighbors. Hence, he is a christian in secret as well as in public: he has as much religion at home, as abroad—in the court yard or muster field—as in the meeting house. Secret prayer is one of the blessed means by which he has fellowship with God, and gains the victory over the sinful propensities of his heart.

4th. The genuine christian, as the great Edwards expresses it, is a *lamb-like, dove-like, Christ-like* creature. He possesses that meek, gentle, forgiving spirit, which shone conspicuously in Jesus Christ. That unparalleled command of our Lord recorded in the iv. chapter and 44th verse of Matthew, expresses the spirit and temper of his heaven-born nature. "*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*" Like the dying martyr Stephen, he can pity and pray for his worst enemies—his cruel persecutors and murderers; and with him can cry, "*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;*" and with our Lord—"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

5th. The true christian is *willing and obedient*. There is no known duty, which he will habitually neglect; no sin in which he can wilfully indulge himself. He loves the law of God, it is sweet and pleasant to his soul. Christ's "*yoke is easy,*" and his "*burden light,*" and he feels it his greatest privilege to deny himself the love and practice of sin, secret as well as open; to prefer every known duty and obey every command of God.

6th. He is a *heavenly creature*. His heart is in heaven and his affections are placed on things divine. While his Lord is at the right hand of the majesty on high, he feels himself a pilgrim and stranger here on earth. His heart longs to be with Jesus—to dwell in his Father's house; for then he will be forever freed from sin—from a tempting Devil and ensnaring world—when a refractory, a hard and unbelieving heart shall no more mar his peace, throughout the endless ages of eternity.

III. We will endeavor to make some application. From this subject we may—

1st. See the danger of poor awakened souls, while out of Christ. The Old Serpent has a thousand fatal stratagems, by which to cheat them out of their salvation; and he leaves no

scheme untried, no project unattempted—to accomplish his infernal purposes. We will mention a few of these devices, by which he effects the soul's everlasting ruin. 1st, the practice which prevails in the world, of pronouncing all joy and comfort, conversion, which follow conviction. For while the Old Serpent is alive, and counterfeiting the operations of the Spirit of God, we have great reason to fear, that instead of sound conversions, they are fatal delusions. 2nd, making a Bible of your experience. This is too common in the present day. It opens a wide field for the deceptions of the Devil. The language in the mouths of many is, my experience is right. That is a good sermon which builds up my experience; and hearing it, I can shout and be happy: but I reject the sermon, which casts off my experience, as false doctrine. Then, poor soul, if your experience should be wrong, you are determined not to be undeceived. 3rd. Another fatal method of deception, is that of making a Christ of your experience. Many there are calling themselves christians, who neglect their duty and indulge themselves in *little* sins; and all their religion and their Christ, consist of their first experience. It is taken for granted that this is right, and never to be further examined. 4th. Another dangerous means of deception, is, that of prejudice in favor of some beloved party. When the truth is forcibly and pointedly stated, many conceive that something is leveled against their party. Their pride is offended and their resentment kindled against the truth; and all is rejected as a heresy: and they say of the preacher, as Ahab said of the prophet, "*I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.*"

1st. From the doctrine in the subject, we may discover that it is a nice thing to be a christian—that religion is something very different from what mankind generally suppose it to be; for it does not consist, 1st, In great awakenings; for Judas, Simon Magus, and Saul the king of Israel, had fearful terrors and dreadful times. They witnessed many declarations of the truth of God, and yet they went to hell at last. I could not give you this for religion, although a sound conversion is preceded by solemn and soul-piercing convictions of sin. Nor does it consist,

2nd. In great flashes of joy and comfort. Those persons we have mentioned no doubt had great joy and comfort. They "*tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,*" "*tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come.*" Yet they fell away until it was impossible "*to renew them again unto repentance.*" Yet, notwithstanding this, your religion is worth nothing unless it is accompanied with joy and peace in believing; yea, joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.

3rd. It does not consist of morality and upright conduct. We are told that Amaziah, king of Judah, did that which was right

in the sight of the Lord, but not with a pure heart. The young man in the gospel declares his great regard for the commandments of God—“*All these things have I kept from my youth up.*” Yet our Lord tells him that he lacked one thing; and that was every thing of a saving nature. And yet, religion is only a fable, a vain fiction, unless it manifests itself in moral conduct and holy obedience to the law of God.

4th. It does not consist in the strictest attendance on all the duties of religion, and obedience to all the ordinances of God.—Recur to the instances of the Pharisees, and Paul in an unconverted state. See, also, the example of the hypocritical Jews, “*They seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God; they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.*” And yet your religion is not worth a straw, unless it is attended with the greatest delight, and unremitting diligence in attending all the duties and ordinances of God’s house.

5th. Nor does it consist in the highest grades of self-denial: not even in suffering martyrdom and death in its most tremendous forms. The Assuritans in the second century, left their families, forsook their possessions, and the lawful comforts of life, and spent their days in uninhabited deserts. The Romish monks denied themselves the pleasures and comforts of human society.

Regulus, the Roman General, rather than stain his character returns to Carthage, where he knew he must endure a thousand deaths in one. And yet, except you deny yourselves, take up the cross, and follow Jesus, and are willing to forsake father and mother, and wives, and houses, and lands, and all things, your religion is vain, and you are yet “*in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.*”

Some are now ready to say, If religion is essentially different from all these things, in the name of God, what is religion? I answer, it is a new nature; it is the image of Christ, the spirit, temper and disposition of Christ.

SERMON XXIV.



THE HOPE OF THE HYPOCRITE.



“For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?” JOB, xxvii. 8.



It is the solemn and alarming declaration of the Son of God, that “*Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;*” and its truth is clearly proved by observation and plain matters of fact. There are comparatively only a *few* of the human race, that profess the religion of Jesus, and but a small number of that *few* who are genuine christians.

We have known many, who stood like tall cedars in Zion—whose evidences of conversion were so fair, that we never suspected that they were other than favorites of heaven, and heirs of immortal glory. But now we have the unquestionable proof that they were deceivers and hypocrites. I allude especially to some of those who fell in with the Shakers.

But in every age of the church there have been examples of this kind—Balaam, in language majestic and sublime, as that of the true prophets, could prophecy concerning the beauties of the Messiah—the star that should rise out of Jacob—and of the glories of his mediatorial kingdom. Judas, Simon Magus, Demas, Hymeneus, and Alexander, carried about them such a show of piety and holiness, as deceived the people of God—and even the apostles themselves. Yet, at last, it clearly appeared that they were hypocrites; and our Lord tells us that in the great day of his appearing, many shall say unto him—“*Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in my name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works?*” But he will profess unto them—“*I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.*”

Is it not possible that many who now profess religion, and whose sincerity is not suspected, will be brought to the judgment bar, weighed in the balances and found wanting? How

necessary then, that every one who has had a hope of salvation, should put the matter to a solemn and impartial trial. An eternity of heaven or hell, depends upon the faithfulness of that hope. If you are hypocrites, now is the time to know it--on a dying bed, or at the bar of God, will be too late. For, says the text, "*What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?*"

In these words there are three things which demand our attention.—Ist. The character mentioned, **THE HYPOCRITE**. The hypocrite, says Brown, is one who like a stage player, feigns himself to be what he is not—assumes the *appearance* of religion without possessing the *reality*. The word hypocrite is derived from *hypokrinomai*, a Greek verb, signifying *to feign, to resemble*, and applies to the self-deceiver, who is mistaken with regard to his true state—and to him who puts on the cloak of religion to deceive the world, in the estimate of his true character; for both of these *resemble* the christian.

Some eminent divines have ranked all hypocrites under the following classes.—First, The *designing* hypocrite, who assumes the plausible appearance of religion for selfish motives, and to deceive the world. Second, The *legal* hypocrite, who builds his hopes of heaven and eternal life, upon the rectitude of his moral conduct—upon the orthodoxy of his religious principles—and upon his strictness in attending to the external duties, and precepts of the gospel. Third, The *Evangelical* hypocrite, who founds his expectations of glory and immortal blessedness upon the internal exercises of his mind—such as convictions, awakenings, comforts, enlargements and reformations, all of which are embraced in our definition of hypocrite.

2nd. The hope of the hypocrite. "*What is the hope of the hypocrite?*" Some wild delusion—some phantom which he has embraced as Christ, and upon which he risks his eternal welfare.

3rd. The fallacy of his hope. "*What is the hope of the hypocrite though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?*" It must perish—it will desert him in death and land his soul in hell.

In the prosecution of this subject, we shall observe the following method;

- I. Give the outlines of the character of the hypocrite.
- II. Point out some of the false foundations of his hope.
- III. Make a few remarks upon the fallacy of his hope.
- I. Give the outlines of the character of the hypocrite.

The hypocrite is one who is afraid to see himself and know his true condition. He cannot bear close pointed soul-searching preaching; such as will search his heart as with a lighted candle, and cause him to see the worst of his case. This is evident from the declaration of the Son of God.—“*This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness*

rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved." When the hope of the hypocrite is surrounded on every side, and begins to shake and totter, when all the secret dens of his heart are uncovered, and every hidden deception brought to light, he feels like the thief that has stolen goods, and concealed them in his house, when he sees the officer coming with a search warrant, with authority to break every lock and search every secret place—he is afraid of the light and anxiously desires to wrap himself in darkness and uncertainty.

1st. The hypocrite's hope may very properly be called his Bible—at least he uses it instead of the Bible—as the touchstone of all practical and experimental doctrines. By it he tries every soul-searching sermon. He is much pleased with cold, formal preaching, or that which is so smooth and general, that it builds up his hope. This he calls the sweet gospel, so pleasing and delightful; this feeds his soul.

But when the doctrine is so close, pointed and searching, that it tries and condemns his hope, then he will say, if this be true I have no religion—I am a poor deluded Christless sinner. But he condemns such preaching as too harsh and severe, and declares that it is law preaching and wrong. All the while he grasps his false hope, and feels that to part with it would be like giving up the ghost.

2nd. The hypocrite is always his own advocate; he has a better opinion of his own religion than any one else; he strains every power to find arguments to prove himself a christian; he hunts up every plausible text of scripture, and misconstrues it in order to strengthen his hope. Yea, never did the ingenious attorney, in prospect of a large fee, and when his honour was at stake, use half the subtle arguments and false reasonings in a bad cause, as does the hypocrite to support his vain hope, and prove to himself that he is a christian.

3rd. If he can only support his hope, persuade himself that he is a christian, and make the world think well of him, little does the hypocrite care, if the Devil has his heart. His powerful struggles are not to gain the victory over the sins of his nature, heart and life, and to destroy all the evil propensities of his heart. No; his highest concern is to collect evidences to maintain his hope, and prove him a true believer. He has no greater struggles with indwelling sin than what is necessary to patch up something which he calls his spiritual warfare. One class of his sins he calls human infirmities, to which the best of God's children are subject. He has for other sins, various nice, smooth names; he styles worldmindedness, industry; Sabbath breaking, works of necessity; lukewarmness in religion, prudence; anger, malice and revenge, a manly spirit, a sense of

honor, or zeal for the truth. In a word, with all his high pretensions for religion, there are some darling sins which he embraces and that bolt Christ out of his heart.

4th. He is a man that wishes to be thought, one of the most charitable and benevolent in all the earth. He embraces every opportunity to do good; he relieves his fellow creatures when in distress. But when he does a charitable or benevolent act, he wishes all the world to know it, and at the same time expects and secretly wishes to be more than overpaid for it, by the accomplishment of some selfish object which he has in view. He wishes all the world to think him a good hearted man, who loves the human race; but let him be once offended, and it will be seen that he has a heart like the Devil—a heart which boils with rage, malice and revenge: and an unforgiving spirit.

5th. The hypocrite wishes it to be thought that he has great charity and christian love for all the people of God. He declares that he loves all christians without regard to names or sects; and in the meantime he is secretly laying schemes to promote the interest and advancement of his own party. With all his professions of christian love, he feels in his heart the venom of the viper, and the rancor of the Devil against those who differ from him in opinion.

6th. He is one who ever sounds the Pharisee's trumpet before him—proclaiming his great *exercises*—his great *attainments*—and his superior *light*;—while he looks down upon other christians as dwarfs in religion—as blind men in a state of darkness. But look into his private character, and you will not discover any remarkable humility; you will find about him no evidences of the heavenly temper and meek spirit of Christ. Instead of the humble spirit and teachableness of the child, so essential to true religion, he is filled with spiritual pride, and ever too wise to be taught.

7th. He cannot bear the truth, or to see his true situation.—Touch his religion, and it is like pricking the sore backed horse—immediately he begins to kick and spurn the truth. He thinks all that is said, is designed for him. Ah, I knew I was meant—I am always singled out and pointed at. Then he proves himself a hypocrite. His own spirit, or rather the spirit of the Devil boils out. Anger, malice, revenge, and an unforgiving, irreconcileable temper, manifests itself for years.

8th. The hypocrite has never had the fallow ground of his heart thoroughly broken up: he has never been effectually slain by the law—and cut off from all dependence upon it as a covenant of works. His nature has never been entirely and effectually changed. The new creature, the life of God, has never existed in him. His outward walk may be changed; he may have been the subject of great awakenings and heart-rending

convictions? he may have been filled with overpowering joy and comfort; he may have unshaken confidence too, that his sins are pardoned—that God loves him, and that he will be forever happy: yet there are some things in religion which are to him dark, mysterious and profound secrets, about which he knows nothing. Those transforming views of Christ, which enrapture the soul with the beauty of the divine attributes—which break and melt the heart—and sink the soul in the dust, under the most humbling sense of its meanness and unworthiness. About these things the hypocrite is altogether ignorant. He knows not what it is to be enraptured with the beauty of holiness—to feel his heart enraptured with all the law of God. He is a stranger to that humility which empties the soul of pride and brings him to live like a little child at the feet of Jesus, and makes him feel himself the least of all saints—the vilest wretch that ever found mercy—which makes him ever willing to be taught.

II. Point out some of the false foundations of the hypocrite's hope.

The *first* class of hypocrites, we shall notice, is the Christless sinner. View these in every part of their characters, and it will appear evident that they are hypocrites. It is true, they are always crying out against hypocrites; they hate them and frequently say of a person—He is a d—d hypocrite. And yet it is very plain that it is not hypocrisy that they hate—but God and religion. The conduct which they condemn in hypocrites, is just such as they delight in, and in the practice of which they live constantly and habitually. With great pleasure they dwell upon the practices of hypocrites, and will descend to particulars and tell that such a one prays in his family—but cheats his neighbor in every bargain and frequently gets drunk. Now, their great object is only to sink the religion of Jesus into contempt and disgrace. They rail against the base actions of hypocrites—not because they are not so much to be condemned, but to make them salves to their own consciences—a deadly poison with which to kill all the conviction and secret drawings of the Spirit of God—that may be left to sleep on quietly and undisturbed. How many unthinking and profane sinners, by their conduct, prove themselves hypocrites? They are not the men they would wish the world to think them. They call themselves gentlemen, and would that the world would believe them such. And when we look at the respectable appearance of their persons, and their polite and affable address, they as much resemble gentlemen as the hypocrite does the christian. But when we take into view their low vices, and base contemptible practices, we conclude that they are just as destitute of the principles of gentlemen, as the hypocrite is of the genuine spirit of christianity.

Again, they wish the world to think them men of truth and strict honesty: yet when they trade with a simple fellow, who knows little of the real value of property, how often will they sell him a horse for a hundred dollars which is not worth as many cents, although at the same time, wishing to be thought a man of truth: he will call upon God to d—n his soul if he is not the best horse he ever owned, and solemnly protest that he is selling him very low—for fifty dollars less than he paid for him.

Now, I would ask, what is the hope of such hypocrites, when God taketh away their souls?

The *second* class we will notice, are those who build their hopes of heaven upon their morality and supposed goodness of heart. They are good citizens, obliging neighbors, kind husbands, dutiful wives, indulgent parents, and compassionate masters. They fulfil all their contracts—they are charitable to the poor—they would divide their last loaf with their fellow men in distress. But, say they, we do not pray—we do not make a great noise about religion as many hypocrites do. Our hearts are good—we bear no malice against any man—our minds are at peace, when at our daily labor or at rest: and if we are not happy after death, God pity the world. All such persons are hypocrites—they have formed a false judgment concerning their situation: all their good qualities—their amiable virtues—only fit them for living in this world; they are destitute of all the qualifications for happiness in the world to come. The young man, mentioned by the Evangelist, had gone far beyond all these, and yet he lacked the grand and most important of all things—an interest in Christ. Many of the heathen, who knew not God, and had not heard of heaven, went as far as all these. What will be the hope of these hypocrites when God takes away their souls?

The *third* class of hypocrites are those who base their hopes upon what they call a rational religion, and may with propriety be called christianized deists. They profess to believe the Bible—but they cannot bear its spirituality. They contend for the truth of christianity—but sensible conversion—feeling the love of God in the soul, and enjoying the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit:—these things they term delusion, or the effects of a heated imagination. They do not wish to be saved by such a religion as this. They prefer a religion rational and philosophical, that will have little praying about it; which will take all the carnal enjoyments, sinful pleasures, and vain amusements along with it—at least upon a polite scale. These also, are hypocrites. True, they base their hopes for heaven upon the christian religion, but reject all about it, that is most excellent and valuable. And where will they appear when God taketh away their souls?

The *fourth* build their hope of heaven upon a certain system of principles—or particular form of doctrines. This system is their Christ—upon it, they trust their soul's salvation. Hint that their hope is false, or differ from their principles, and you take a dog by the toes; they begin to bite and scratch—and cast forth the venom of the Old Serpent.

Here, my brethren, do not mistake me. I by no means presume to reject creeds or confessions of faith, or forms, or systems of sound doctrine; for they are frequently recommended by the apostle Paul; and Jude insists that we should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. A system of sound doctrine is as necessary to the power of religion, as the body is to the living man. The soul-damning evil is not in having creeds and confessions, but putting them in Christ's stead. The hypocritical Presbyterian makes a Christ of his confession of faith—the forms and customs of his forefathers. He has never seen the spiritual beauty of one sound doctrine contained in his system; and yet upon it, are built all his hopes. Like the ancient Jews, who depended upon their privileges and institutions, crying, the temple of the Lord; and we are Abraham's seed; we were never in bondage to any man. The hypocritical Presbyterian can live prayerless—drink too much whiskey—and cheat his neighbor in a bargain: but—touch not his hope—he will sting like the viper.

The hypocritical Baptist makes a Savior of his adult baptism by immersion—On this are founded all his hopes for salvation. He can live without prayer, profane the Sabbath, and act like a man of the world. But do not touch his hope—do not even hint that it is false.

The Christ of the hypocritical Methodist, are the doctrines of Wesley and Fletcher; his perfection, falling from grace—his malicious invectives, and unchristian abuses of Calvinism, together with the forms and traditions of his church. Upon these he rests his salvation, while he is swollen with spiritual pride, and breathes a spirit of bitterness and hatred against every christian under heaven who differs from him in sentiment. Touch his hope, his form or his system, and you have fallen in a den of rattlesnakes: anger, wrath and the fighting spirit are instantly shown.

The hypocritical Marshalite's Christ, is in having no system at all; neither creed nor confession; and in having the name of christian: but at the same time, introducing a new creed and confession—bringing all the world out from among names and parties, but in the meanwhile, striving with all his might, to make all of his party, by boasting of astonishing new light, while his hard spirit and enmity to the people of God in every christian church, proves that he is yet in darkness, and abiding in death.

Where will the hope of such hypocrites as these be found when God takes away their souls?

The *fifth* class, are those who found their hopes of eternal life, on a strict compliance with all the external precepts of the law and gospel, or a strict performance of all the outward duties of religion. This is their hope and their salvation. They pray in secret and keep up hereditary prayer in their families. They observe the Sabbath—attend the worship of God—they devote their children to God in baptism—and sit down at the communion table from time to time. But this is all their religion. They never saw their lost state out of Christ—they never felt the pardon of sin. Communion with God, and the shedding abroad his love in the soul, are to them, dark and unmeaning mysteries. Like Paul in his unconverted state, they are "*alive without the law.*" They are "*ignorant of God's law, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*"

The *sixth* class of hypocrites, are those who are secretly convinced that they have not experienced a divine and saving change. But it is like giving up the ghost to relinquish their false hope. Therefore, they ease their consciences with the vain supposition that they were sanctified from the womb, like Jeremiah and John the Baptist; or else, that the spiritual life has grown up with them indiscernably, as in the cases of Samuel and young Timothy. And then they endeavor to lay conscience into a deep sleep. Say they, Jeremiah and John the Baptist were sanctified from the womb. If it were once so, it will be so again; therefore, many now-a-days are sanctified in the same way.

To answer this logic, I would reply—The Bible no where says that such cases will again occur.—Or, in your own style—Enoch and Elijah went to heaven without tasting death. It was once so—must it be so again? Or are many in the present day translated to heaven without seeing death? The patriarch Isaac, and John the Baptist, were born through supernatural agency. It was once the case—will it be so again? I apprehend we have as much reason to conclude that thousands now-a-days, are born of parents ninety or a hundred years old, as we have to believe that like numbers are sanctified from the womb.

As to Samuel, he was called, and young Timothy was acquainted with the scriptures. But none dare attempt to prove that the work was insensible with either of them. Indeed, we have reason to believe that they sensibly felt and experienced the convicting and converting operations of the Spirit of God; since children at a very early age are the subjects of deep and solemn impressions. The hope, which has no better foundation

than insensible religion, supported by these vain suppositions, is the hope of the hypocrite and shall perish.

But, say you, some eminent authors tell us thousands are in heaven who could neither tell the time, place, nor circumstances of their conversion.

However respectable such authors may be, they never yet showed, "*Thus saith the Lord*," for such assertions. Search the whole Book of God from beginning to end, and no such sentence can be found.

But our Lord expressly informs us, that "*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*"

The seventh class of hypocrites, are those whose hopes are founded upon the lowest marks and weakest evidences of grace, and yet they grasp their false hope with death-like power. They have had some awakenings of conscience—some kind of comforts, and enlargements in prayer. When they hear close and faithful preaching—when they hear a faith's view of Christ described, and the exercises of the believing sinner in coming to Jesus delineated—there is a *dark place* in their experience—a secret consciousness that all is not well. But so much are they attached to this hope, that to give it up, is like death; and thus situated, the poor deceived soul, tries a thousand expedients to still conscience and keep all within asleep. He will call himself a weak believer—a babe in Christ. He will hunt all the low marks of grace and endeavor to apply them; such as *love to the brethren*. And he will tell you that he never had the faith of *assurance*, but he thinks he has that of *reliance*. During the week he will try to patch up a religion that seems pretty sure; but when on Sabbath he hears another soul-searching sermon, all is rent and torn to pieces like a tattered garment. But still he cannot give up his hope. He will recollect some passage in some old book; will bring up the example of some old regular circumspect formalist; *he* says thus and so; and if there be a christian in the world, he is one. He will call to his assistance some firm, smooth sentences which he has heard from a carnal and ungodly preacher; and with such means as these, he props up his hope for a while. But again, when the spiritual minister searches his hope to the bottom, a *dark spot* is seen, and conscience whispers—all is wrong. Sometimes he is almost ready to relinquish his hope; but when it comes to the point, O, says the deceitful heart, if you give up your hope all the world will despise you as a hypocrite, and you will sink into contempt. If you let go this hope, perhaps you may never obtain a better; will then the *wicked* will brand you as a hypocrite; christians and despise you, and of all creatures you will be the most mise-

rable. Here he will attempt to throw around him the veil of uncertainty, and *hope for the best* as he calls it, and thinks himself a *weak* believer. Shall not his hope also perish, when God takes away his soul?

The *eighth* class of hypocrites, are those who make a Christ, or righteousness of their convictions and reformations. They have been awakened to a deep and awful sense of their lost and perishing condition—they have applied themselves to the use of all the appointed means of grace—they have forsaken all their gross out-breaking sins—cursing, swearing, drunkenness, and Sabbath breaking—they have turned their backs upon cards and dice, balls and merry frolics—and now they are sober, circumspect, praying persons. A surprising change is visible to the world; like Saul, they seem to be other men.

All this while, they are as destitute of a saving change, a vital union to Christ, as the dead body is of a living soul. An humbling, alluring and transforming view of the Lord Jesus, is still a dark secret; a profound mystery, which they cannot understand. And yet they rest upon their partial reformations, and substitute their external change for Christ; and thus they venture into eternity.

A *ninth* class of hypocrites found their hopes upon their exercises. They substitute bodily or mental exercises in the room of Christ. I care not how great may be the bodily or mental agitations, if they spring from the operations of the Spirit. It is immaterial how much the strength of the body is exhausted—or how much the mind is agitated; if it be the effect of rational, scriptural views of God and divine things. No difference how loud the shouts, if they are produced by an overflowing flood of heavenly joys.

But when a man relies upon his exercises and agitations for salvation—when he makes them his Bible and draws from them the evidences of his hope—and judges the characters of his fellow professors by them—it proves beyond a doubt, that his hopes are hypocritical and shall perish. The spiritual pride, conceit and contemptuous disregard of the truths and doctrines of the Bible, peculiar to such persons, demonstrate that their hopes are not founded upon Christ the rock of ages.

The *tenth* class of hypocrites, are those who build their hopes of heaven upon enlargements in prayer, and meltings of the passions. They have had deep, pungent alarms—they have seen themselves on the crumbling precipice of an eternal hell. For a while they have forsaken their old sins, prayed and cried with vehemence and importunity. Perhaps while praying in secret, or hearing a solemn and affecting sermon, their hearts have been amazingly softened—they were melted into a flood of tears—and felt a wonderful flow of expressions in pouring out

their souls to God in prayer; and at this juncture, all their burden, and distress for sin left them. And now they suppose themselves converted; when in reality they have not seen the secret wickedness and hidden enmity of their hearts against God. Their souls have never been ravished by a sight of the beauty and glory of the divine attributes shining in the face of Jesus. They have never had such a discovery of sin as melted their hearts with shame and sorrow and self-loathing before God. No—to this they are strangers. The only foundation of their hope is, their enlargements in prayer, and softening of the passions. And hence when they lose these, they are in great distress—they seek for them with importunity. And when they feel them again, they have found their Christ.

There is also an *eleventh* class of hypocrites, they found their hopes upon some *creature of the imagination* instead of Christ. They also, have had awakenings, deep soul-rending convictions. They were striving for life and death to enter the strait gate, when, at length some picture drawn upon their imaginations presented itself. Perhaps a man suspended on a cross, dying in agonizing torture. Says the deceived soul, I saw it plainly—I saw the blood streaming from his side—I saw the nails in his hands and feet; or, perhaps, I heard a voice speaking, particularly saying, “*be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee;*” or a surprising light, visible to my bodily eyes, shone all around me; or, a text of scripture that I never thought of before, was thrown into my mind and I felt peace and joy and comfort. This is my experience—this is my conversion—and this is my hope. If this is all, it is the hypocrite’s hope and shall perish. How far the imagination may be affected when the Holy Ghost reveals the spiritual glories and beauties of Immanuel to the soul, I shall not presume to determine; but it is certain, that the Devil can present these images to the imagination. He can produce shining lights, sounds and audible voices, and can introduce texts of scripture into the mind; but unless you have rational, scriptural views and discoveries of Christ’s person, glory and suitableness, revealed to your heart by the agency of the spirit through the medium of the word, your hope is that of a hypocrite and must perish.

The *twelfth* class are those that have embraced a false Christ, and are deceived with a false conversion. Theirs is perhaps, the most critical and false case this side of hell. Under deep, solemn, and pungent convictions, the soul is brought almost to the new birth. At this critical and all important moment, the Devil transforms himself into an angel of light, and as the Magicians in Egypt imitated the miracles of Moses, the Old Serpent with all his infernal subtlety counterfeits the operations of the Divine Spirit, and presents a phantom or charm to the soul as like the

gospel discovery of Christ, as it is possible for a deception to be like the reality. The poor soul embraces and mistakes it for Jesus. This is accompanied with a number of counterfeit evidences, which confirm the soul's hope and fix it immovable as the hills. He is filled with love and gratitude to God, which arise from selfish motives, because he thinks God loves him, has pardoned his sins, and will take him to heaven. His zeal and fortitude in the cause of religion may equal and perhaps surpass that of the genuine christian; but remember, that humility, meekness, and self-emptiness, peculiar to the true saint, are not found about him—but a proud, haughty, untractable spirit.

That delight in the law of God—that breathing after holiness, and tenderness of conscience to every divine command—such distinguishing characteristics of the genuine disciple of Jesus—are not marks by which he may be known. He has still a secret love to some darling sin, or pleasing idol. What is the hope of such hypocrites as these when God takes away their souls?

The *thirteenth* class of hypocrites are those who depend for salvation and eternal life upon an *old experience*. Some ten, fifteen or twenty years ago, the deceived soul had something very like an experience of religion—and so plausible—so nearly resembling it, that it is a difficult matter to determine where the deception lies. His convictions and the exercises of his mind, go hand in hand with those of the true believer, until within a hair's breadth of accepting Christ. When he tells of his joys and comforts, they are so nearly like those of the true believer that it would be impossible for the most discerning to point out the error. And yet the whole is a delusion—there is no genuine religion in it. It is of this the poor hypocrite makes his Savior, while he lives prayerless—profanes the Sabbath, and practices sin. All he can tell of religion is his *old experience*. From year to year, he never speaks of communion and intercourse with God, which proves that his also is the hope of the hypocrite.

The *fourteenth* class consists of those who are described in the Word of God as *stony ground hearers*. Look at them in their joys and comforts—view the apparent change in their lives—their diligence and delight in the duties of religion, and the ordinances of God's house, and you cannot distinguish them from the truly pious. The difference does not become remarkable until the storms of persecution arise—until the temptations, the alluring vanities, and pleasures of the world draw them away, and then it is very obvious that all their religion is but a delusion and a counterfeit. How just the figure—*some seed fell upon stony ground*; this represents the hypocrite; some upon *good ground*; this represents the christian. The seed sprang up on the rock, and in the deep rich soil; and the difference cannot be marked

until the scorching heat of the sun, withers that which is on the stony ground.

III. We promised to make a few remarks upon the fallacy of the hypocrite's hope: "*What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?*" It is a vain and illusive hope which must perish. In death it deserts him and leaves his soul to wail the loss of all the blessedness of heaven. What signifies his having gained a regular standing in the church of God—what though he hath gained great spiritual light and knowledge of the things of God—what if he can pray and preach the gospel with great popularity—what if he has gained esteem and a reputation, among the pious, for his supposed virtue and holiness—what if he hath gained an unshaken confidence of heaven and eternal life:—what will all this avail him when God taketh away his soul, when Jehovah's vengeance and fury and indignation shall pursue him to the deepest vaults of hell, where he shall ever feel his unmixed wrath in keenest torment!

S E R M O N X X V.

THE DECEITFULNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”

JEREMIAH, xvii. 9.

THAT the heart “*is desperately wicked*,” is a truth confirmed by reason, experience, observation, and the word of God. Look abroad upon the world of mankind, and there you have ocular demonstration of the fact. You may see almost the whole of the human race, running heedlessly to hell—working out their damnation with diligence and industry. Look into your own hearts, and if you are not blinded by the Devil, you will acknowledge that they are a fathomless abyss of horrid wickedness and hellish pollution; swarming with filthy lusts, evil thoughts, and vile imaginations—a lodging for Devils, a haven for every unclean thing. Look into God’s word and discover what testimony the Divine Spirit gives concerning the human heart, and his boundless wisdom can fathom all its infernal depths. He says, *“every imagination of the thoughts” of the heart is “only evil continually.”* And in the words of the text he has carried the description of its wickedness and deceitfulness as far as the force of language could carry it.—“*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?*” As it is evident that the heart of man is desperately wicked—that previous to regeneration, it is entirely destitute of the moral image of God—and that the likeness of the Devil is enstamped upon it, perfect and complete in all its features; so also it is “*deceitful above all things;*” deceitful above all human conception—beyond all comprehension. To prove this truth no subtlety or ingenuity of argumentation is necessary. Behold the swinish drunkard, the profane swearer, and debauchee, who breathe the air of the infernal world, and wallow in all the filth of depravity, but yet hope for heaven and eternal happiness, from the pre-

tended goodness of their hearts, the honesty of their conduct and their charities to the poor, and the absolute mercy of God. See the carnal formalist, who pretends to believe the truths of the gospel, who may read in his Bible every day, if he chooses, that “*except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;*” that “*he that believeth not*” on Christ, “*must be damned;*” that without genuine repentance, he must forever perish; that without holiness, *no man shall see the Lord*—his conscience bearing him witness, that there is something in religion of which he is ignorant; and that, he is an entire stranger to an experimental work of the Spirit of God upon his heart: yet calling himself a christian, a weak believer, and entertaining a false hope of heaven and eternal happiness, in spite of all the close, particular and soul-searching marks and evidences, which God’s words and his ministers can point out.—These with many other instances which might be mentioned, afford the most shocking proofs of the deceitfulness of the human heart. The language which every false hope of heaven loudly speaks, is, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?*”

The heart, literally, is the soul of animal life; from which the vital principle is communicated to every part of the body. In this, and many other passages of the scriptures, it is used metaphorically. As the heart is the spring of action to the body—the part which first lives, and is the last to die; so the soul is the nobler part of man—the immortal part—the source of all moral exercise.—Therefore, with all its intellectual powers, it is called the *heart*; it being to the *whole man*, what the heart is to the *body*.

In the text two things are predicated of the human heart—

1st. That it is “*deceitful above all things.*” It is far beyond all the powers of thought or comprehension, to conceive of the infernal arts, schemes and stratagems, of the heart, by which Christless sinners try to betray their own souls into the hands of the Devil and accomplish their own damnation, and that too, in defiance of reason, conscience, the strivings of the Holy Spirit, the light of divine revelation, and the prayers, admonitions and warnings of God’s ministers and people.

2nd. That it is “*desperately wicked,*” altogether void and destitute of every thing morally or spiritually good, and wholly inclined to evil, depraved and devilish above all conception.

And then follows an awful question, “*Who can know it?*” This is dreadfully expressive of the boundless, unfathomable depth of the deceit and wickedness of the human heart—an abyss of such boundless wickedness and deceit which nothing less than the infinite mind of God can comprehend.

In speaking upon this subject, we shall follow the natural divisions of the text, and—

I. Show how the deceitfulness of the heart manifests itself;

II. Show in a few particulars, how it discovers itself to be desperately wicked.

I. Show how the deceitfulness of the heart manifests itself. This it does—

1st. By forming excuses to hide the horrible malignity of sin, by covering with a harmless character, every damning sin, which strikes at the very life of the soul. The man whose affections are glued to the world, who pursues it to the neglect of God and his soul, who can find no time for secret or family prayer, or self examination, no time to attend the preaching of the word, is told by his deceitful heart, that all this is a proof of his industry and frugality, and brings to him scripture to prove it.—*If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.* He who neglects the worship of God in his family, during harvest, hay-time, or when gathering his corn, is told by his deceitful heart, that it is as much his duty to provide for his family, as to pray for his salvation; and this eases his conscience at once. The man who drives his waggon on the Sabbath when upon a journey is told, that this is a work of necessity. He must hasten home to his family—he can be as well exercised driving along, as lying by exposed to every kind of company. He that can sing a profane song—who can fiddle and dance or open his doors for dancing frolics, is kept easy by his deceitful heart whispering, that it is an innocent diversion and harmless mirth—that no person can expect an old head upon young shoulders. He who lives as prayerless as a brute and never bows his knee to God, is told by his deceitful heart, that he can offer a few petitions after he lies down on his bed at night, or before he rises in the morning—that he can have as good thoughts in the woods, hunting his horses or following his plough, as if he were upon his knees. If he happens to get drunk occasionally—if he swears an oath, or gets into a violent rage and beats one of his fellow creatures—O, says the deceitful heart, that is human infirmity—the frailty of nature—the best men have these failings. See what David did—the man after God's own heart—he killed a man and took his wife. This is a worse thing than ever you were guilty of. Keep yourself easy—trust in God and all will be well.

2nd. By forming excuses for the sinner, which prevent his seeking the salvation of his soul.

The deceitful heart points out to some, the absolute mercy of God, and conceals his inflexible justice, and the strictness and severity of the law. It says—it is true, you cannot say you have been converted—you never had the faith of assurance; but this is all whim and delusion, about which some hypocrites and enthusiasts make a great deal of noise; but you are an honest man—you never wronged your neighbor of a sixpence—and

you can defy the world to lay any thing mean and villainous to your charge. If you had but one loaf in the world, you would divide with your friend in distress—there are thousands worse than you—if you do not go to heaven, God pity the world—there will be nobody saved. And here multitudes rest easy and secure, until death and hell awake them.

To others the deceitful heart presents one soul damning sin, as an excuse for another. Thus, some plead their ignorance, and use it as an excuse for making no vigorous exertions about their salvation.—I am a poor, weak, ignorant creature—I know but little; and where little is given, there will be but little required. Thus, they fancy themselves secure, never considering that their ignorance is their soul-damning sin. *"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness, rather than light, because their deeds were evil."* Others ease their consciences, by reflecting upon the wickedness and depravity of man by nature. We are poor, weak creatures—we can do nothing—we must wait God's time—he must do all. Tell me, do you believe what you say? When is God's time?

The deceitful heart quiets the conscience of others by persuading them, they are doing the best they can. Says conscience, all is not well with you—if you die in your present state you will be damned. But says the deceitful heart, never fear, you do the best you can, and hope God will accept the *will* for the *deed*. Conscience says you are an unconverted wretch—that you never felt the pangs of the new birth—but the heart declares, that regeneration is all a whim and delusion: don't give up your hope—you have a little religion—you have a little love to God—a little faith—and some good desires: you can shed a few tears at a sacrament: conscience says you have the witness within you who testifies that all is not well—there is something in religion which you know nothing about; but the heart again gives the conscience ease by telling the sinner, that he has some religion, though not enough to die with: but do not disturb yourself—you will obtain enough before you die, or may be in the dying hour.

3rd. The heart manifests its deceitfulness by influencing the sinner to put the most favorable construction upon his own case. This is a grand stratagem of the Devil, by which he baffles every conviction, sears the conscience, and holds the soul effectually under his power and dominion. Light has come into the world but men love darkness, and therefore will not come to the light, lest their evil deeds should be discovered, lest their situation should be presented to them, as it really is. They cannot bear that their hopes should be tested to the foundation; therefore they hate the soul-searching preacher as they do the Devil. Like Ahab, when he wished to be deceived by the ly-

ing spirit, in the mouth of his false prophets, when told to inquire at Micaiah, the son of Imlah, whether he should go to Ramoth Gilead or not. No, said he, I hate him; I cannot bear him; for he never prophesied good concerning me, but evil. In the same manner the deceitful heart prepares the sinner before hand, and gets him to resolve that he will hold to his false hopes to the last, and will not believe one sentence the minister says concerning regeneration or heartfelt religion; although never so clearly or forcibly proven from the word of God.

When the preacher lays down the awakenings, the struggles and painful convictions, and the unspeakable joys and comforts of the work of conversion, then the carnal sinner feels himself secretly condemned. His conscience tells him he knows nothing of such a work, but it is too humbling to the proud deceitful heart to yield. O, says the deceitful heart, do not give up your hope—it is dreadful unbelief to doubt—do not believe the doctrine—if you do, you will sink into despair. It is the way of the preacher to be harsh and severe. A certain, noble, pious old minister, who knows more Greek and Latin than he does, never preaches up the necessity of such things. You never heard him mention conversion or regeneration in all his sermons. Do you not remember having read in an old book, which said a man might have grace and not know any thing about it? Thus it is, that conviction is effectually murdered, and the conscience lulled asleep.

Sometimes it happens, that the deceitful hypocrite falls in company with two or three warm, lively, experimental christians, who have passed through the struggles of the new birth and entered the strait gate of conversion. He hears them tell their experience of a work of grace, and what they have felt and tasted of the love of God in their souls. This galls his conscience; it pains and torments him; for all these things seem so dark and mysterious to him that he can form no idea of them. Perhaps some one asks him, What has God done for your soul? Can you give us a relation of your conversion? In this situation, the poor hypocrite is confounded; he knows not what to do, and perhaps with rage and madness he answers—This is not a fair question; it is a profound secret which no person has a right to know. Yes, says the deceitful heart,—it is a secret which ought not to be discovered to the nearest friend on earth.—The husband ought not to discover it to the wife, nor the wife to the husband. And at the same time, the poor hypocrite knows that he can give no such relation—his conscience tells him that he is an entire stranger to spiritual experience—that it is a matter of which he is wholly ignorant.

Again, under an awakening, soul-searching sermon, his conscience is dreadfully disturbed. Like Felix he is made to tremble under the apprehension that all is wrong; is made to cry

out with terror, If the doctrine be true I am a hypocrite, and am undone. Then the Devil and his own heart present to him the example of some dry formalist, whose life is as blameless as that of Paul before conversion. Says the deceitful heart, Do you not know such a man, an elder in the church—a man of the most blameless life—a sensible, prudent man? and if there is a good man in the world, I am sure he is one. He says he knows nothing about conversion—he never had a sorrowful hour for sin in all his life—he never shed a tear about his soul since he was born, unless it was at the time of a sacrament. He declares he never met with Christ—he never felt the pardon of sin—and he thinks all sensible exercises and experiences are delusion. This stifles conviction immediately; for the example of the sensible cunning hypocrite has more weight with him, than all that the evidences of God's word and spirit can say to the contrary. But if the deceived soul is so tossed and tormented by awakening and soul-piercing doctrine, that it can find no rest, and must be convinced that there is a reality in experimental religion; then his deceitful heart works him up to believe that he is possessed of it already; but only in a low degree. He is persuaded that he is a weak believer—that he has a little grace, although he is as ignorant as a brute of the new birth. Though he is conscious he has never beheld the glory of God in the face of Jesus, or felt the pardon of sin, yet he has some twinges of conscience, and some fears of hell, which he calls sorrow for sin, he has some good desires, which are called the actings of grace; and on very solemn and affecting occasions, he can shed tears, though his eyes have been dry all the year before. This he names his religious comforts. Thus he is deceived by the Devil and his own heart.

When the ministers of God surround his hopes on every hand, by incontrovertible evidence from the scriptures of divine truth proving them to be false—and when he feels that they are shaken to the foundation and conscience stares him in the face, O, cries the deceitful heart, do not give up your hope, you are a doubting christian. The fault is in the minister, and not in you; he places the marks of genuine piety too high—higher than any christian in our day ever had them—yes, higher than those he possesses himself. Then the minister brings forward the word of God, and shews his "*Thus saith the Lord*," for the evidences which he has produced, and lets the poor deceived sinner see that the Divine Spirit places the standard of vital godliness equally as high as the minister of Christ. He shows them Job seeing God, beholding his glory, and abhorring himself and repenting in dust and ashes. He shows them Zechariah's description of the humble penitent looking upon a pierced crucified Jesus, by the lively actings of a saving faith, and bleeding and breaking un-

der this view, until the soul weeps and mourns with as sensible pain and sorrow, as even the tender parent felt for the death of an only son. He shews them David's soul panting for the living God, as the hunted heart for the cooling water brooks, and looking back to the land of Jordan, and the Hermonites and the hill of Mizar, where he had sweet senses of communion with God. He shews him Paul's description of saving views of Christ, such as are peculiar to every christian in his conversion—a beholding with open face, as in a glass, the glory of God in the face of Jesus, until the soul is transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. But, says the deceitful heart, these are the exercises of Job, David and Paul, who were very eminent saints.—It is not every one that is a David, a Job or a Paul: I know nothing about such exercises as these. But, I will not give up my hope, for I am a weak believer. I have a little grace.

But again, the deceived soul is attacked on every side, and he has to wrestle as for life and death, to oppose conviction, when the preacher of the gospel comes so close upon his conscience and describes his case so exactly, that he seems to say, "*Thou art the man*," and he is upon the point of releasing his false hope, the deceitful heart cries out—the minister's mind is prejudiced against me—he preaches at me altogether—he points at me particularly. These are my own hopes, my own thoughts, and my very language. I know very well he is aiming at me. And then prejudice and resentment fill the mind; and were the preacher to speak even with the eloquence of Gabriel the soul would not be profited. Such is the deceitfulness of the human heart, and especially in formal professors, that it is almost impossible to touch their consciences and shake their hopes. Indeed, from all appearances, we may rationally conclude, that many of them have been given up by the Spirit of God to believe a lie, that they may be damned.

4th. By inclining the deceived soul to draw the most favorable conclusion from his past exercises.—By this mean,

First. The backslider who has murdered all his convictions and has settled upon the mere form of religion, is held effectually under the power of the Devil. He has had deep convictions and painful awakenings of conscience. This has induced him to pray in secret and in his family, and to forsake the commission of all gross sins. This distress has gradually worn off and left him a dead form. He has never had one view of the glory of God in Christ; he has never seen the attracting glory of the plan of redemption; yet he rests perfectly secure—and doctrines the most spiritual and searching cannot alarm him. He can follow the preacher in the description of the law-work, and can witness it in every part; and although he must stop there and

proceed not one step farther, and his conscience tells him he is a stranger to the spiritual views, and joys, and comforts of the converted soul, yet the Devil and his deceitful heart persuade him, that since he can bear witness to a great many things necessary to conversion, and that there is a wonderful change wrought in his life and conduct, and therefore, he may hope for the best, and esteem himself a weak believer.

Secondly. The deceived sinner, who is resting upon false comforts, flashes of joy, melting frames, and enlargements in prayer, defends himself against all convictions. When the evidences of the christian are shewn, his marks are exhibited and his exercises are described from the clearest light of God's word, and strike directly at his hope, and conscience whispers that all is wrong, and he has no religion, and he is just ready to give up his hope, when Satan and the deceitful heart cry out, Be not so hasty—you can go with the minister through all the preparatory work—you have had melting frames and great enlargements; you have been relieved of all your grief and distress. And thus, again, the conscience is laid to rest in silence and security.

Thirdly. By this mean, the evangelical hypocrite works himself into something which very nearly resembles every thing in the christian's exercise. He has acquired a large degree of doctrinal knowledge; he has had sharp and painful convictions; he has felt something of his dying need of Christ; he has had some transports of joy and comfort, which bear a great resemblance to the joy and delight of the converted soul: he reads much and studies to improve in knowledge; he hears every part of the christian experience, so often related, and so particularly described, that he understands it as a science. And as he has some fears and scruples now and then, and some movings of the passions, his deceitful heart, induces him to believe, that all this is *his own exercise*, that *he* has felt and experienced these things himself.

But it is impossible to describe the ten thousandth part of the craft and subtlety of the heart, displayed in its infernal acts and stratagems, practiced for the destruction of the poor sinner. The mind of man cannot fathom it, nor the tongues of men or angels describe it; for, says the Divine Spirit, "*Who can know it?*"

II. Point out a few particulars, from which the great wickedness of the heart may be discovered. And—

1st. The heart is the source from whence spring all that wickedness, sin, and abomination, which are discoverable throughout our whole lives, either in thought, word or action. So says our blessed Lord; "*For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.*"

As a single ray bears no comparison to the vast quantity of light emitted from the whole body of the sun, so even the most flagrant act of wickedness, of which you have read or heard, be it murder or the most shocking act of brutality, bears no proportion to the unfathomable oceanlike wickedness even of the best heart that now hears me. Yes, my brethren, the seeds of every sin, lie in each one of your hearts. There is nothing too vile for the best of you to do, if you were left to yourselves—were God to withhold his restraining power. There is that in your hearts which would incline you to the most horrible scenes of wickedness. You would be liable to steal, to rob, to murder, and run into the most hellish crimes; yea, to spread misery and destruction among your fellow men, and to imbrue your hands in your own blood.

The heart will appear to be desperately wicked, if we consider the testimony of the Spirit of God, who declares it to be enmity against God, and filled with all possible hatred to the holy nature and will of God.—“*The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be.*” “*Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only evil continually.*” In the unregenerate sinner, the enmity and opposition of the heart to God is perfect and universal, in the constitution of the soul, in all its active powers and faculties. By the fall of Adam, the sinner lost all knowledge of God, and consequently all love or delight in his infinitely glorious perfections. He lost the moral image of God, which consisted in righteousness and true holiness entirely, and in place of it the image of the Devil was drawn perfect and complete, the consequence of which, is the most horrid enmity to God and every thing which bears his image. The carnal sinner boasts of his love to God—he never hated God in all his life—he has always loved him since he can remember. Yes, it is very true he loved some ideal God—a creature of his own imagination—entirely suited to the temper and disposition of his own heart—a God made of mercy altogether, or rather foolish fondness for his creatures, but as destitute of holiness, truth, and justice, as the Devil. A wooden god or a god of old rags would be of as much consequence.

But you hate the living and true God with perfect hatred—that Being whose very essence consists in infinite, eternal spotless purity, holiness, justice, wisdom, truth and grace—the God, the Eternal all, before whom angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, sink into nothing—whom all rational and holy beings love, adore and worship. This is the God whom you hate and abhor, and your hatred and enmity against him are manifested by your habitual aversion to his commands and his authority, and by the secret defection of your heart from his will and government. Witness your abhorrence of secret prayer, and fam-

ily prayer—and were the Holy Spirit now to break into your heart with a ray of divine light, and discover to you the bottomless abyss of wickedness, concealed in your heart, you would immediately feel the rage and enmity of the Devil rising and boiling within you, against God. Then you would acknowledge that you possessed that hellish disposition, which would tear the Almighty from his throne, and destroy his existence, if its power were only equal to its malignity.

3rd. The heart will appear to be "*desperately wicked*," if we regard it as the seat of Satan and the throne of his power. It is the Devil's strong fortress, by which he holds the sinner in subjection. Therefore, in scripture he is represented as being armed and having full possession of the heart. So that nothing less than the infinite power of the Almighty God can dispossess him. And never did a valiant and experienced general display half the skill and ingenuity in fortifying a castle or city, as the Devil in guarding the human heart against every attack of the word and Spirit of God. In the first place, he has it enclosed on every side, with spiritual blindness as an impassable wall. In scripture, it is said, that he "*hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them.*"

By this means, he keeps them blind to all the attracting glories and beauties of Christ, of heaven and divine things; and, blind to the miseries, dangers and horrors, which await them while in an unconverted state, he surrounds them with hardness of heart, as with a circumambient rock of adamant, so that all the curses and terrors of the divine law, all the peals of thunder, and streams of forked lightning, which flash from Mount Sinai, and all the black clouds of wrath gathering thick over the sinner's head, pregnant with storms of Almighty vengeance, will not startle or move them. Neither will the overtures of divine love, the tender calls of infinite mercy, the powerful agonies and dying groans of the Redeemer, in the smallest degree, affect him. To these we may add pride, legality and self conceit, which are so many barriers that serve the purpose of fortifying the heart and keeping his possession more secure. These lull the conscience asleep, and repel the most pungent convictions.

But the last and strongest means of fortification, and that which most effectually keeps the sinner under his power, is unbelief. This, like a mighty mountain of steel rolled against every avenue, fortifies the heart with such impregnable strength, that nothing less than the arm of Omnipotence can possibly open it. In this state the Devil holds his palace and his throne in the human heart. It is entirely under his power.—It is his workshop, where he forges and invents the most horrid acts of wickedness—his magazine filled with evil thoughts, filthy lusts,

and vile affections, yea, every thing necessary to assist the soul in working out his damnation.

4th. The heart will appear desperately wicked, if we consider the tendency and consequence of its wickedness, viz: the final damnation of the soul. In the word of God we are told that sinners in the hardness and impenitence of their hearts, treasure up for themselves "*wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;*" yea, every sinful thought, word or action which springs from the wicked heart, provides another bolt of divine wrath, which shall be hurled against the sinner in the day of vengeance and perdition. Who can count all the evil thoughts, words and actions of his whole life, springing from the heart? As well might you attempt the enumeration of the particles of dust upon the earth. And every one of these prepares a flaming bolt of burning wrath, against the great day of God's vengeance, and the righteous revelation of his judgment. To this may be added the blood of souls which will be upon the head of the hardened and impenitent sinner. The man who raises a family in vice, will very likely be imitated by his children, and their children will follow the example of their parents. He who denies the necessity of conversion and regeneration, his children and their posterity will be educated in the same opinion and belief, and will deny their necessity also. Thus the impenitent sinner may hand down a bad example from generation to generation, which may prove the damnation of hundreds. By this mean a man may be guilty of the everlasting destruction of his posterity, even for twenty generations. Oh! what an immense amount of wrath must that be, when flaming bolts of divine vengeance will be awarded as the just desert of every sin of heart and life, and for the murder of all the souls who have been damned by his ungodly example! And what is inconceivably more dreadful, is, that punishment due to the sin of sins—the slighting and despising of all the overtures of mercy will be charged upon the dreadful account. "*He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?"*"

SERMON XXVI.

THE NEW BIRTH.

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
JOHN, iii, 3.

In the preceding chapter we have an account of Christ's going up to Jerusalem to the feast of the passover, and there performing many wonderful miracles, which clearly proved the divinity of his person and the authority of his mission.

In the 23rd verse, we are informed that many believed in his name when they beheld the miracles which he wrought, and among them, we may safely reckon Nicodemus one, of all others, the most unlikely to give credence to the divinity of the mission of Jesus Christ.—*For, not many wise, not many noble or mighty of the earth, are called:* God often passing by such, and choosing the vessels of his mercy from amongst the poor and illiterate, who are esteemed by the great men of this world, the dregs of creation.

From these remarks, we would not have it to be inferred that *the wise, the noble, and the great, are altogether excluded from the benefits of the atonement;* for some of these also shall be the eternal monuments of his mercy and free grace. The arm of Omnipotence is sufficiently powerful to humble the proudest hearts and induce them to submit to the honorable, but yet humiliating terms of the gospel. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, a member of their senate or Sanhedrim, belonging to the sect of Pharisees, who, more than all others, were remarkable for their strong prejudices against Christ and his doctrines, and their devoted attachment to self-righteousness, and the *literal* fulfilment of the law; therefore, in Romans it is said that they, “*Being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish a righteousness of their own, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.*” And it is not at all likely that such characters, proud of their knowledge of the law, and swollen with worldly honors, should part with their pride and

relinquish their honors in obedience to the novel doctrines of an illiterate man.

Nicodemus came to Jesus by night.—The time and manner of his visit to the Saviour are worthy of remark. He came by *night* in a secret and private way, unwilling we suppose to own Christ and his cause publicly, like many of the present time, for fear of the scorn and reproach of the ungodly.—Whereas, the children of the Devil put on their father's regimentals and boldly espouse his cause regardless of God or man. His conversation, when he had come to Christ, is somewhat strange. He speaks well of him and readily acknowledges the divinity of his mission and his miracles. “*And he said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*” From this we may learn that men may speak in favor of Christ and his cause, and discant largely upon many of the important doctrines of religion, while they are entire strangers to the saving change wrought by the Spirit of God.

The doctrine of the new birth, though so necessary to eternal life that none can be saved without it; yet the statesmen and philosophers of the world, and formal professors who have a name to live whilst dead in trespasses and in sins, have no taste or relish for it. If told that they must be born again, must be made new creatures in Christ Jesus, and have a vital principle of holiness implanted in their souls, they will readily discover that, like Nicodemus, they are altogether ignorant of it, or that they are deceived—falsely supposing themselves experimentally and spiritually acquainted with it, when at the same time they indulge themselves in the practice and love of sin.

Nicodemus frankly acknowledges Christ to be a teacher sent from God, but Jesus sets before him the necessity of something which he has yet to learn, much more important than the simple confession of his assent to the truth of his mission. Without noticing what Nicodemus had said, he tells him at once and plainly, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”—As if he had said, your confession that I am a teacher come from God, and your acknowledgment of my miraculous works, are proper enough, but of minor importance, and deserve not to be mentioned when I would impress upon your mind this great and indispensable truth—“*Ye must be born again.*” Thou callest me *Master*, but until thou art born again, thou hast not learned the first and most important lesson which I would teach thee.

The Saviour lays great stress upon the importance of the new birth. But how different with many in this age of the gospel light, who call themselves christians, and who rarely call in question their hopes of heaven.—They spend their strength and

time in quarreling with other denominations about controverted *points*, and disputing about matters of small concern to the neglect of this great and all-important inquiry.—Am I born again? Have I been made a new creature? Is Christ formed within my soul the hope of glory?

In that awful day, when the universe, assembled, must appear before the judge of quick and dead, the question brethren, will not be, Were you a Presbyterian—a Seceder—a Covenanter—a Baptist—or a Methodist; but, Did you experience the new birth? Did you accept of Christ and his salvation as set forth in the gospel?

My dear fellow-creatures, if you would be the followers of Christ, here your religion must commence. You must be regenerated before you can live a spiritual life. If you neglect this one matter, all your endeavors will be vain, how strong soever your hopes of heaven may be. No difference how fair your profession; how upright your conduct and conversation, unless you have been born from on high, death will rob you of your religion, and the wrath of God, like a mighty deluge, will sweep you to the lowest hell—For “*Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”

In these words, we shall observe, First, *the person speaking*. The Lord Jesus Christ, the great God-man, Mediator, who came to work out the salvation of guilty sinners—the God of truth, of unshaken veracity, who declares eternal life attainable by those alone who have experienced the changing power of his grace.

Secondly. *The subject spoken of*. The new birth, a saving change which must be wrought in the hearts of all who are made partakers of the heavenly inheritance; or the implantation of a new principle of spiritual life in the soul.

Thirdly. *The necessity of this change*. “*Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” As no man can enter this world but by the natural birth, so no one can ever live to God in this world, or be admitted to the immediate vision, or full fruition of him in heaven, unless he be born of the spirit.

In the further prosecution of the subject I shall endeavor to shew—

- I. What is implied in the phrase, “*Born again.*”
- II. Some of the properties of this change.
- III. Some reasons from which the necessity of it may appear: and
- IV. Make some improvement of the subject.

I. Shew what is implied in the phrase “*Born again.*”

By the new birth or regeneration, we understand the implantation of a living principle of grace in the soul, which, before was spiritually dead. To be born *naturally*, man must be con-

ceived and brought forth: to be born *spiritually*, he must be begotten of God. The child experiences a wonderful change when ushered into life; but that is a much more wonderful change which the unregenerated sinner undergoes when transformed into the image of God. Indeed, it is so powerful and extraordinary, that nothing but the Almighty power of Jehovah can effect it. In scripture it is expressed by a "New Creation." "*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.*"—By a *resurrection*, "*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:*" by a *passing from death unto life*, and many such metaphors, which clearly prove that there is a distinct difference between the state of grace; or spiritual life, and the state of nature or spiritual death.

1st. *To be born again*, implies, or perhaps more properly presupposes, that he who is born again was before destitute of spiritual life, and consequently dead in sin, lying under the curse of the law, and exposed to the wrath of God. By nature this is the situation of all the sons and daughters of Adam, and they would ever thus remain, if the sovereign grace and rich mercy of God had not provided a way by which they might be plucked as brands from the eternal burning. Sinners in their unregenerated state are spiritually dead in a two-fold sense. First. They are utterly destitute of a living principle of grace, and are altogether under the government of sin. Their situation is strikingly depicted by the prophet Isaiah—"The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores; they have not been closed, neither mollified with ointment." Their understandings are so darkened, their eyes so blinded by the God of this world, that they cannot see the infinite glories of the Deity, or behold the heart-ravishing excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ; nor do they discover the intrinsic vileness and destructive nature of sin. Their *wills* are enmity against God, voluntarily rejecting his laws and authority, and choosing to indulge the gratification of the sensual appetites. Their *consciences* defiled by dead works, and seared as it were with a hot iron, do not speak for God and declare to them the danger of living in sin. Their *memories* are treacherous and apt to forget even God himself. Their *affections* are in woful disorder and fixed upon sinful objects. Their *hearts* are *deceitful above all things and desperately wicked*.—*Every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts is evil, only evil, and that continually.* And from the noxious abundance of wickedness generated in the heart, the mouth speaketh, and the actions flow. Secondly. They are not only entirely destitute of a living principle of grace and under the control of sin, but they are under the sentence of eternal condemnation. "*He that believeth on*

him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already." As long as sinners are out of Christ and remain strangers to the new birth, they are obnoxious to all that wrath and vengeance denounced in the word of God, to the workers of iniquity. All the perfections of Jehovah are engaged for their everlasting ruin, so long as they continue in sin. The sentence of eternal death is already passed against them, and shall surely be executed unless they be made spiritually alive by the operation of the Holy Spirit and the renewing of his grace.

2nd. The phrase "born again" implies an irresistible exertion of the Almighty power of God. What power, save that of the Omnipotent, can raise the dead or bring the soul to love what it naturally hates, or induce it to hate what it is naturally inclined to love? Such expressions are used in scripture concerning the new birth, as make it very certain that the agency of the Almighty Spirit of God is necessary to perform it, viz. that of a *creation, resurrection, passing from death unto life, &c.* as we have already mentioned.

It is also abundantly evident from those passages of scripture, which ascribe the whole work to the power of God.— "*No man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.*" "*And what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.*"

The word of God is frequent also, in its declarations respecting the helpless condition of sinners and their total impotency to all that is morally or spiritually good, declaring them "*Dead in trespasses and sins;*" that "*Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness;*" "*Servants of sin;*" "*Enemies to God by wicked works.*" "*The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*"

Now the preaching of the gospel, and all the efforts which creatures can use, could no sooner bring the spiritually blind soul to perceive the moral excellency and beauty of the divine perfections, or impart to the dead soul spiritual life, than they could create an universe or raise the dead. That same omnipotent arm which stretched out the heavens and laid the foundation of the earth; the same agent who spoke universal nature into existence, must work this change, effect this new creation, or it never can be done.

But, in order to assist you to determine whether you have been the subject of this change, I shall notice some of the

steps which the spirit of God usually takes in bringing the soul from a state of spiritual death to life and peace.

And, now, I beseech you carefully to attend and examine yourselves by what you hear; for if you are strangers to the exercises which I shall mention, you may be sure you are strangers to the new birth, are now out of Christ, and if you continue in this condition, you shall never enter heaven so long as the veracity of God remains unchanged; for the Lord Jesus Christ who is the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person, hath declared, "*Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" Then,

First, by the instrumentality of the word the Spirit flashes upon the sinner's mind a deep and heart-rending sense of his sin and misery. This is the first step of the spirit's work in the application of the plan of redemption. "*And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*" He first convinces of sin, then of righteousness; for sinners will never come to Christ or submit themselves to God, until they are heartily convinced of sin; and those who have never had the law brought home to their consciences with such power as to make them groan in secret, and cause them to spend many sorrowful days and sleepless nights on account of sin, have never to this day seen nor left their need of Christ as a Saviour. They are yet "*in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity,*"—"*dead in trespasses and sins,*" exposed every moment to the vengeance of Jehovah.

When the Spirit of God awakens the sinner's conscience, he discovers in the glass of that law which he has so often trampled under his feet, thousands of sins which, before, he had never considered as such, or had regarded as *very small sins*.—Now they are seen in a very different light. Secret as well as open transgressions are arrayed before him, and that too, with such clear evidence and full conviction, that he is no longer able to defend himself, but stands speechless and condemned at the bar of his conscience.

The soul being thus convinced of aggravated guilt, conscience pronounces sentence—"*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them.*"

Secondly. The Spirit gives the sinner a sense of the dreadful penalty of the law which denounces "*Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.*" This begets in the soul horrid fears of divine wrath, and he is made to feel himself a most wretched creature, justly deserving all the miseries and bitter consequences of sin to be endured in this life, and all the fiery torments in hell, which inflexible justice has prepared for the workers of iniquity. Yea, this makes him tremble to the inmost soul, and look as if affrighted at the

angry countenance of the Almighty God, whose commands he has so often violated, whose omnipotence he has derided, whose goodness he has despised, and whose grace he has rejected.

Behold the guilty culprit! his conscience is awakened from its slumbers by the thunders of Mount Sinai; his heart is writhing with agony under the apprehension that the wrath of God, long delayed, will burst upon his head with tenfold vengeance, like the stormy tempest of the night, and like a mighty deluge sweep his guilty soul to the deep vaults of burning Tophet. His soul is now sorely crushed under the burden of his enormous sins; his thoughts are full of fear and astonishment, as though hell itself was ready to seize upon him and swallow him up in its unfathomable gulf.

But I shall not undertake to determine how great a measure of this is poured out upon all men in their conversion, or how deep and pungent their convictions may be. Some, in the pangs of the new birth, have been scorched, as it were, with the very flames of hell, so that they might truly say with the Psalmist, "*How long, Lord? wilt thou be angry forever? Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?*" "*God's wrath lieth hard upon me, he hath sorely afflicted me.*" Others have been brought savingly to Christ without feeling such dreadful horrors. Yet all who experience the new birth, must, in a greater or less degree, feel such conviction or distress for sin, as will render the Christless state intolerable, and effectually cut them off from the law as a covenant of works.

Thirdly. The next thing the Spirit does in producing this change, is to cut off the sinner from all dependence upon his self-righteousness, and bring him to despair of obtaining salvation by the deeds of the law.

But sinners are so strongly attached to the law, as a covenant of works, that they will not part with it until it is torn from them by the arm of God. They hold to it as the man held to the ship: when one hand was cut off, he held with the other; and when that was cut off also, he caught hold with his teeth.

Are they convinced that they are debtors to the justice of God, and that continuing in sin, they must be inevitably destroyed—yet they will not be persuaded to part with their own righteousness and come to Christ, as miserable, helpless, hell-deserving rebels, begging alms at the door of mercy. No! they will rather fly to the broken law and endeavor to clothe themselves in their own filthy rags, which will only serve as fuel for the devouring wrath of God, and faggots to burn them eternally in hell. When God, in the day of his power, designs to work a saving change upon the soul, he brings home the law, by the energy of the Spirit, in its full extent and spirituality to the con-

science, girding the soul with the cords of death, holding it to the rigorous commands of perfect obedience under the penalty of God's wrath and curse. Thus, a greater degree of light being let into the understanding, the law discovers the abounding of sin; corruption being thereby irritated begins to rage and foam with hellish impetuosity. Thousands of abominations now lift their heads, which the sinner never saw in himself before.—Pride, unbelief, hardness of heart, legality, atheism, enmity against God, and blasphemous thoughts of God and religion, rise in his bosom, so that his heart is a very hell within him. Whilst he is endeavoring to cleanse his heart of these foul monsters, which is not yet sprinkled with gospel grace, those corruptions which before lay quiet in the corners and neglected fly up like dust. Or, like a man mending a dam, while he is repairing breaches and strengthening every part of it—behold! a mighty flood comes down and overturns all his work, and sweeps all before it, as well that which was newly laid, as that which was laid before. This was the case with Paul before he was brought to close with Christ and accept of salvation by free grace.—*“But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.” “For sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it, slew me.”* And so must every soul be slain by the law, before they will part with their self righteousness, and submit to the abasing terms of the gospel. They must be so deeply convinced of the large and extensive demands of the law, and their own entire helplessness, wretchedness and depravity, as will bring them to despair of ever obtaining salvation by what they can themselves do. They must see that they are pursued by the inflexible justice of God, ready every moment to be engulfed in the devouring flames of his wrath; and, under such views, they will be shut up to the only possible method of escape, viz. by trusting the sovereign mercy of God: and still be convinced that they are no more able to come to Christ, or act faith upon him, of themselves, than to create a world, or stop the sun in his course, or change the universal law of nature, before they will submit themselves to the righteousness of God by faith.

Fourthly. In carrying on this change, the Spirit of God gives the soul a believing view of the glory, suitableness, willingness, and mediatorial fullness of Christ. He, who first commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into his benighted soul, communicating such a blaze of divine glory to the understanding, as discovers the infinite excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ, as *God* is clothed with all the boundless perfections of

Deity, and as *Mediator*, *God* and *man*, in the same person,—the everlasting God united to human nature, possessing all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

In him the soul discovers a glorious righteousness and complete redemption, exactly suited to the case of such a poor miserable bankrupt, as it conceives itself to be;—a righteousness so large and wide, as to answer all the demands of the law of God, and satisfy infinite justice, a righteousness so pure, so excellent, that the penetrating eye of the Eternal Father, can perceive no blemish in it. A righteousness by which every soul that becomes interested in it, is freed from condemnation, and at the same time, the honor of the law, and all the divine perfections are secured. In a word, the soul beholds in Christ complete salvation, pardon of sin, and peace with God, quickening, sanctifying and persevering grace, and eternal life in the immediate presence of God. In short all that a perishing, hell-deserving sinner can desire.— Oh, says the soul, such a Savior, and such a salvation, do I need. I feel myself a poor miserable bankrupt overwhelmed under the weight of my obligations to justice, but in Christ I see a complete righteousness, satisfactory to justice, and that too, offered to me on the most reasonable terms—even without money and without price. How suitable are such terms to my lost and perishing condition! I am polluted, overspread with the leprosy of sin, from the sole of the foot even to the crown of the head, wounds, bruises and putrifying sores. But the blood of Jesus possesses a virtue infinitely sufficient to heal all my diseases and cleanse my polluted soul. Oh! what a wonderful person is Christ! What love, compassion and grace! that he should come over such mountains of guilt and dreadful provocations, to manifest the riches and the glory of his grace to me, who so long trampled on his laws, grieved his Holy Spirit, and so often rejected the offers of his grace, while thousands were left to quench the motions of the Spirit of God, and perish in their sins.

3rd. To be “born again” implies that an universal change takes place in all the powers and affections of the soul. Before the new birth, all its faculties are opposed to God. The understanding, will, memory, and conscience, are totally depraved and estranged from God. The moral likeness of Jehovah, which was originally impressed on the heart of man, is effaced, and the image of the Devil enstamped upon it. The affections are in sad disorder.—For God who is infinitely glorious and excellent in himself, and highly deserving of the supreme love and adoration of every intelligent being, is the object of the sinner’s enmity and hatred. God requires all rational creatures to place him above all other objects in their affections; but the unregenerate sinner, not only debases him to the lowest seat in his heart, but entirely excludes him. The will chooses, and the

heart can participate in all manner of wickedness; and they unite to offer contempt to the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe. Sin, that abominable thing which God hates, and which he cannot look upon but with abhorrence and detestation, the mean drudgery of Satan, which degrade the human soul to a level, yea, even beneath the brute creation, are the darling objects of the sinner's love. He holds fast his dear lusts, his idols, and bosom sins, although at the peril of eternal damnation.

But, in regeneration a happy change passes upon the whole soul. The image of Satan is defaced, and the likeness of God is drawn anew upon the soul. The understanding that was before dark and blind as regards spiritual objects, is now enlightened in the Lord. The *will*, the *memory*, and *conscience*, are rendered subservient to the designs of God. The *affections* are also renewed: what the creature once hated, he now loves supremely, and what he loved is now the object of his abhorrence.

But of these we would speak more particularly.

In regeneration the *will* is renewed.—“*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*” When by the agency of the Spirit, the heart is opened to see the beauty and amiableness of God's moral perfections, the glory and fitness of Christ in his mediatorial character, and the hatefulness of sin, the will is powerfully, yet rationally drawn by the almighty power of God, to choose him and delight supremely in him as the soul's only satisfying portion and exceeding great reward. The taste and relish of the soul being changed, and the enmity of the heart broken, its inclination is towards God and holiness. The sweet morsel, sin, which was once so greedily swallowed, and embraced with such complacency and delight, the sinner now loathes, and is as anxious to get clear of it, as one who had swallowed a cup of poison, and so long as it remains about him, he regards it as his sorest plague and heaviest burden: and often he is made to exclaim with the apostle, “*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*” To be perfectly free from sin, and to be conformed to the likeness of God in holiness, is the heaven after which the renewed will, longs and pants.

The *memory*, also, is renovated and strengthened in every soul that is born again. It is indeed, weakened with regard to those things which are not worthy to be retained by it; for the Saviour teaches his followers to forget injuries and lay aside resentment,—“*But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven.*” But, it is strengthened with respect to important matters, and strives to act in obedience to the wise man's directions.—“*My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments.*” When divine

truth is relished by the soul, it is impressed powerfully upon the memory. Saith David, "*I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me.*"

The *conscience* also partakes of this change. Though once lulled to sleep, and seared as with a hot iron, now sprinkled with the blood of Christ, it speaks faithfully for God, and brings the soul carefully to examine what is sin and what is duty. Like a lamp trimmed and newly supplied with oil, it sends forth its light into the darkest and most secret corners of his soul, discovering sins which the soul had never before suspected, especially the original corruption and depravity of our nature; that seed and bitter root from which all actual sin proceeds. The conscience now sleeps no more. It thunders its voice throughout the soul, and drives the sinner from his bed of sloth. It excites powerfully to obedience in things which could not have been perceived before. It restrains from sins of which the soul had no conception. It urges the authority of God, to which the heart is now reconciled, and willingly acknowledges; and engages the creature to the performance of duty at all hazards. The mind is so filled with the fear of God, that the force of the fear of man is broken. A sense of guilt and consciousness of past sin, harrows up the soul, and fills it with bitter remorse and anguish. Whenever it reflects upon its sinfulness, the wounds are opened afresh; and thus it is, that the soul is ever kept tender to a sense of duty for time to come—is driven to Jesus Christ, the only physician who can extract the sting of guilt, whose blood alone can purge from all dead works.

The *affections*, too, feel this change. They are *rectified* and *regulated*. First. They are *rectified* inasmuch as they are placed upon proper objects. The regenerate man's desires are fixed upon God himself, and the things above. He who before cried with the men of the world, "*Who will show us any good,*" now joins with the Psalmist, saying, "*Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*" The time was when he saw no beauty or comeliness in Jesus for which he should desire him; but now Christ is the centre of all his desires. He appears now to the eyes of his understanding, enlightened by the Spirit of God, to be altogether lovely excellent and precious. The main stream of his affections run towards God. He wishes to be holy, as well as happy; and would rather be good than great. His hopes were before low and earthly: they are now elevated to that glory which shall be revealed. He entertains the hope of eternal life, based upon the word and promise of God, which, like an anchor, stays and supports his soul under the severest trials. And as he has this hope of eternal life within him, *even Christ formed within him the hope of glory*, he labors to purify himself even as God is pure. He is so transported with the in-

finite glory and excellency of the Deity, that he can no longer deny him the throne of his heart. He freely acknowledges him worthy of his strongest love, and habitually longs after the complete enjoyment of him.

He loves the law of God, though it strikes at his beloved lusts and can cry, the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just, and good. He loves the ordinances of God; those galleries of grace, in which he now and then beholds the King in his beauty, and the language of his heart exclaims, *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord God of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.*" And having passed from death unto life, he loves the brethren—the people of God. He loves God for *himself*, and what is God's for *his* sake. Whenever he discovers the image of his heavenly Father, he loves it and esteems those in whom he sees it, his brethren and sisters—the excellent of the earth—heirs of immortal life and glory. The enmity of his heart is turned against *sin* both in himself and others. The language of every renewed heart is, "*I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me.*" Sin was once to him the fountain of pleasure; he loved it as his life, and rolled it as a sweet morsel under his tongue. But now he views it in its abominable, cursed nature, intrinsically base and directly opposed to God; and to be freed from it is his continual prayer.

Secondly. In regeneration the affections are not only *rectified* and placed upon proper objects, but they are also *regulated*.

Our affections, when fixed on the creature, are naturally extravagant. When we joy in it, we are apt to joy overmuch; and when we sorrow, we are apt to sorrow to excess. But grace bridles these affections and keeps them in proper bounds. It makes a man hate his father and mother, his wife and children, comparatively; that is, to love them less than he loves God. It also sanctifies the lawful affections, making them to flow from proper principles, and directing them to right ends. There may be an impious love and an holy desire after Christ and his grace; as when men seek Christ not from any view of his personal glory or heart-ravishing beauty, or any desire after him as a Saviour from sin, but only from a principle of self-love or self-preservation, because they wish to be delivered from wrath and hell. There may be, also, an unsanctified sorrow for sin—not on account of its ungodly nature, but because of its bitter consequences—the torments of hell.

Thus Cain, Esau and Judas, with thousands of ungodly sinners, had dreadful fears of hell, with heart-cutting grief for sin, and yet remained in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. A man may love his father and mother merely from instinct, without any respect to God's command binding him to do so. Grace

sanctifies the affections in such cases, causing them to flow in a new channel of love to God, respect to his commands, and regard to his glory. When the affections are too low, grace elevates them, and gives their throne to God, pulling down all rivals, whether persons or things and places them at his feet. It fixes the affections so firmly upon God, that the creature is disposed at his command, to quit all things else, for the sake of Christ, to desert father and mother, the dearest relatives and enjoyments, if duty calls him. It makes even lawful enjoyments like Joseph's mantle to hang loose about him, that he may easily let them go, when in hazard of being ensnared by holding them.

4th. There is a change made upon the body and the members thereof, as respects their use, when the soul is regenerated. "*Know ye not, that your bodies are the members of Christ?*" "*Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's.*" Here we see what a surprising change is effected by regenerating grace. The body, which was before an instrument in the hand of the Devil to execute his commands, and perpetrate the most horrid acts of rebellion against God, now becomes the *temple of the Holy Ghost*. The members which were before instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, are appropriated to holy purposes. The *eye*, which conveyed sinful imaginations to the heart, is now under a covenant, employed in beholding the visible works of the invisible God, which declare his eternal power, and manifest his glory to his intelligent creatures. The *ear*, which was the porter of death, giving sin a ready admittance into the soul, becomes the gate of life, through which the word reaches the heart. The *tongue* which used to set on fire the whole course of nature, and was employed in vain, unprofitable conversation about things pleasing to the carnal mind, or in blaspheming the dread name of Jehovah, is now engaged in glorifying his name and setting forth his praise. In short, there is a powerful and universal change wrought upon the whole man, soul and body.

Here I might descant largely upon a change in the company he keeps, in his conversation, in his discharge of all the duties of life, in his motives and objects; but these, for the present, must be passed by.

II. We promised in the second place, to show some of the properties of this change. This I must leave for another opportunity, and shall now conclude, with some improvement of what has been said.

1st. This doctrine may be improved to the conviction of all unconverted sinners-

The large majority of those who hear the gospel and live in the church, are strangers to the new birth, dead in trespasses and sins, and exposed to the heavy vengeance of an incensed God. Christ himself tells us, that "*many are called but few are chosen;*" and elsewhere, "*Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it.*" Now if it be so, that but few find the narrow way that leadeth unto life, and the greater part of mankind travels the broad road to destruction, is it not a matter of the last importance, for each of us to know in which of these roads we are walking? Are we born again, and have we Christ formed in us the hope of glory? or, are we yet in our sins, and in danger every moment of being plunged into everlasting burnings?

Every soul of us, here to-day, is traveling on one of these roads, and ere long heaven and hell will make the final separation.

When Xerxes, the king of Persia, beheld the millions who composed his army, he sat down and wept, because in one hundred years not one of so great a multitude would survive. But much greater cause have ministers of the gospel to weep and mourn, for, in the space of an hundred years, the greater part of all the congregations to whom they are now delivering the message of God, will be howling with the damned in hell, and be eternally out of the reach of mercy. As sure as you live and die strangers to the new birth, you shall perish forever: for saith the Lord Jesus Christ, the compassionate friend of sinners, and only living and true God, "*Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"

Now, my dear friends, I entreat you by all the joys of heaven; by all that bliss which the redeemed enjoy in the presence of God—by all the bitter reflections of an accusing conscience, the fears and dread of future wrath, which you shall feel in a dying hour, if strangers to Christ—by all the torments of hell—by all the woes which infinite justice has prepared for Devils and damned ghosts of Adam's race—that you seriously examine yourselves, whilst in the name of the dreadful God, at whose bar you and I will soon appear, I propose the following questions to your consciences.

1st. Were you ever convinced that you were spiritually dead? that you were in a Christless state? Did a sense of this give you deep distress and heartfelt sorrow on account of sin?

Now if your consciences declare that you never had any such sense of sin as gave you heart-rending pain and anguish, made you lament and mourn and deeply bewail your wretched and deplorable situation—beyond all doubt you are at this mo-

ment destitute of living religion. You have never come to Christ, and are yet obnoxious to eternal death. What a dismal state! Every morning that you rise from sleep, God's curse is upon you. Every night when you lie down upon your bed, you go to rest with his heavy curse upon you. Your food, your clothing, your houses and lands, and all your enjoyments are cursed of God. The artillery of heaven is leveled against you, and all the infinite perfections of that God, who, by a word of his almighty power, brought all the universe into existence, are engaged to make you eternally and completely miserable, if you continue to reject Christ, and live in the practice of sin. And can you be easy in this situation? Oh, what madness and emphatic folly to be careless and unconcerned, as though assured that all was well! when at the same time, conscience tells you that you have never taken the first step towards reconciliation to God. You have never had one sad day or gloomy night on account of sin, during your lives; and yet you hope to go to heaven! This is the hypocrite's hope and shall perish. Unless you are truly sorry for sin and feel the pangs of the new birth, you shall never set foot in the paradise of God. The morally unclean can never dwell in the New Jerusalem. Perhaps some of you are putting off this important matter to a future time. You confess that you are not "*born again*," but hope that sometime hence you will get better and repent, and become new creatures. But, poor sinner, what if you should die and be damned before that *time* comes? Delays in all cases are dangerous, but they are particularly dangerous when your immortal souls are concerned. "*Wo to them that are at ease in Zion, that put far away the evil day.*" But if you have been convinced of sin, and have felt sorrowful because of it, tell me,

2nd. Were your convictions so deep and piercing as to make a Christless state utterly intolerable? Unless they have gone thus far they have not proved effectual.

Cain had great horrors of conscience and deep convictions of sin, yet he wore them off by persevering in wickedness.—Felix trembled while Paul "*Reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come*," but yet he told him, "*Go thy way for this time, when I have a more convenient season I will call for thee;*" and we hear no more of his convictions. And I doubt not that there are thousands in hell, burning in the flames of God's vengeance, who have murdered their convictions and stifled the voice of conscience in the same manner. Unless your conviction has been so distressing that you could not possibly live without Christ and an interest in his salvation, you may rest assured that you have never come to Christ. So strong is the enmity of the sinner's heart to him and the plan of salvation and so great his attachment to the law as a covenant of works

that he will never part with his own righteousness and submit to Christ, until he is effectually cut off from every other refuge. And if you have never come to this, and continue in your present situation, you must eternally perish. But,

3rd. Were you brought to see that all your prayers, tears, resolutions, vows and good works, were so abominable in the sight of God, that it would be just for him to send you to hell for the best duties you have ever performed. Have you ever seen that it was as impossible for you to satisfy Divine justice, and recommend yourselves to his favor, as to stop the sun in his course? Have you despaired of salvation by the deeds of the law, as poor, hell deserving creatures, cast yourselves at the feet of sovereign mercy, and pleaded your own sinfulness and unworthiness, and entreated the free mercy of God for Christ's sake? If not, you are still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity. For you must be "*Dead to the law*," before you can "*live unto God*;" and divorced from the law before you can be married to Christ.

In this land of Gospel light may be found many formal professors of religion, who will tell us that they never depended upon their own righteousness; that they always knew its insufficiency to save them. Ask them, and they will tell you that they never had any difficulty in laying aside their own righteousness; they always knew their own works could not save them. Are there any of this class that hear me to-day? I can assure such that they are even now depending upon their own righteousness; and if they have not found it the hardest work in all the world, to get clear of the belief, that they could be saved by the deeds of the law, and come to Christ as helpless and dependant creatures, having nothing to plead but guilt and misery, they are yet as strangely wedded to dead works, and as great strangers to the new birth as the Pharisee or Mahomedan. But if you say you have been thus convinced of sin and have been cut off from any dependence in your own righteousness,

4th. How did you find relief from your distress! Was it by a spiritual, supernatural discovery of the dignity, glory and excellency of Christ? Of his mediatorial fullness, suitableness and willingness to save you? Did you see such a glorious beauty and fitness in the plan of salvation by free grace, as gained the full consent of your soul, without any reserve, to fall in with the terms upon which Christ offers himself to sinners? What effect did such a discovery of Christ in the gospel, produce upon your soul? Was such an universal change, as I have described, produced in the powers of the soul? Is the enmity of your heart turned against sin in yourself and others? Do you loathe and abhor sin for its own sake, because it dishonors God and caused the Saviour to bleed, more than for its soul damning nature? Do you regard the small inclination and movings of the heart to sin,

as the plague of your soul? Do you look upon sin as your worst enemy? Do you love God more supremely for what he is of himself—what you discover of his infinite glory and perfection, than for his benefits? Is a sense of his love, the light of his countenance, communion and fellowship with him, that which affords you more happiness and comfort, than all the riches and pleasures of the world? Is holiness the very soul of that bliss which you continually long for? Do you delight to converse, to study, and meditate upon God and Christ, the glories of heaven, and the spiritual exercises of the soul? Do you long to be free from this loathesome body of sin to be made ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb—to be admitted to the immediate vision and full fruition of the eternal God—to join that happy number who have washed their robes and made them white with the blood of Jesus, in praising, wondering, and admiring the boundless depths of the love of God?

If you can appeal to God and your own consciences that this is your exercise, and that this is the habitual frame and temper of your heart, you may conclude that you are "*born again*," and shall enter the "*kingdom of God*." As sure as your friend Jesus lives, so sure shall you live in the eternal and complete enjoyment of that salvation which his blood and merits have purchased. You are "*born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible—by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.*" And as you are born of God, you are sons, and if sons, then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, who is heir of all things—heirs of immortal life and glories, such as "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.*" O, bless the Lord for his distinguishing love and grace, which he has conferred upon you, while thousands as good by nature, have been left to die in their sins.—Live to his glory, and let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.

SERMON XXVII.

THE NEW BIRTH.

“Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
JOHN, iii, 3.

There are no questions of greater importance or of such general concern, as those suggested by this subject. Am I born again, or still dead in iniquity? Have I been created anew in Christ Jesus, or am I still under the dominion of sin? Am I an heir of heaven and immortal glory, or am I a child of the Devil, a bond slave to Satan and an heir of hell?

These are questions of vital interest to every man and woman of Adam's numerous posterity; for every inhabitant of this vast globe belongs either to one or other of two classes, viz. Those who are born again, and those who are spiritually dead. All men are either friends and lovers of Christ, or enemies to God and rejecters of his offered mercy. Then, it is a matter of great importance that we know to which of these classes we belong. If we have been born again, then shall we be made partakers of everlasting life—we shall shine brighter than the sun in his midday splendor. Clothed in the righteousness of Jesus—a more glorious robe than Gabriel ever wore—we shall walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem. We shall be crowned with immortal glory and be forever refreshed with the fruit of the tree of life, which grows in the midst of the paradise of God. But if we are not “born again,” there is but a step between us and hell. We are hanging by the brittle thread of life over the lake that burns with fire and brimstone—and this thread in the hand of an incensed God, who is every day angry with the wicked; and none can tell how soon he may plunge us irrecoverably into burning Tophet, where his vindictive justice is displayed in making its inhabitants completely and eternally miserable.

Now, my friends, as you value your immortal souls, and wish to be eternally happy, I beseech you, lay this matter seriously

to heart, and never give up the important search, until you have arrived at certainty with regard to your situation. It is an awful hazard, to risk the everlasting concerns of your immortal soul. You would scarcely be willing to live in uncertainty of the title to your estate. The fair paradise of God, an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory, are of infinitely more value than all earthly possessions; and how can you live in quiet, when in danger of losing these, and in danger of eternal torment too? If not born again you must be excluded from heaven, shut out from the blessed society of God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and of angels and glorified saints who eternally surround the throne. And this is not all: you must be banished to an infinite distance from all that is good, and consigned over to all possible evil. You must take up your abode with Devils and reprobates, and all the damned crew who dwell in the dreary dungeon of eternal darkness.

In treating of this subject you may remember that the following method was proposed, viz:—

- I. Shew what was implied in the phrase, “*born again*.”
- II. Mention some of the properties of this change.
- III. Some reasons wherein its necessity may appear.
- IV. Offer some improvement of the subject.

Of the first we have spoken, and shall now proceed—

- II. To mention some of the properties of this change.

1st. It is a change of the qualities and dispositions of the soul, and not of its substance or essence. Vicious dispositions and habits are removed, and the contrary qualities are implanted.—“*The old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts*,” is put off, and “*The new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness*,” is put on. No new power or new affections, are created in regeneration; for man lost none of these by the fall. In his unrenewed state he has an understanding, but it is blind and dark; a will perverse and opposed to the will of God. He has the same affections of desire, love and hatred: but his desires are after the things of this world, the gratification of his base, sensual appetites. The affection of love burns strongly in his heart; but it is fixed supremely upon himself, his honors, pleasures and beloved lusts. His hatred is still powerful: but he hates God, his laws and his authority.

Now, in regeneration, the Spirit of God does not take away these powers and affections of the soul, but sets them right and puts them under proper control. The same love once so strongly attracted by the creature, is now set upon God. That hatred and enmity which was once exerted against God and holiness, are now vehemently turned against sin. Nor can they be satisfied with any thing short of the death of every sin. The

understanding, before dark, is enlightened, and the stubborn and rebellious will is bowed in sweet conformity to the will of God.

2nd. It is a supernatural change. He that is "*born again*," is born "*of the Spirit*." Great natural changes may be wrought upon the creature by the assistance of divine revelation and the common influences of the Spirit. A man may be changed from open profaneness to morality—from morality, to an external profession of religion; yea, even to some degree of spiritual light, like Balaam and Judas, who were enabled to understand the lights of God in a degree so eminent, as to be able to instruct others. He may also attain to something like an abiding change in his affections. His delight in spiritual duties, his sorrow for sin, and fear of wrath, may be kept up in the soul for a long time. By the common operations of the Spirit, a great change may be effected on the will, as is evident from the example of the Israelites, who said unto Moses, "*Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee: and we will hear it and do it.*" And yet they remained a rebellious and gainsaying people.

But in regeneration, nature itself is changed, and made a partaker of the divine nature,—not essentially by a participation of the divinity—but by a conformity to God, in views and affections; in the frame and temper of the mind. Therefore, it must needs be a *supernatural* change; for it is as impossible for those "*Dead in trespasses and sins*," to renovate the soul in all its faculties, as for those in the graves to raise themselves to life. None but the sanctifying spirit, can form Christ in the soul.

3rd. It is a change into the *likeness of God*. "*But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" As there is a resemblance between the parent and child, so every one that is born of God, bears his image.

Man, in the natural state, resembles the Devil. Hence, they are said to be of their father the Devil.—"*Ye are of your father, the Devil, and the lusts of your father will you do.*" But when this happy change is made, the image of sin is obliterated, and the likeness of God restored. Christ himself, the brightness of his Father's glory, and express image of his person, is the pattern after which the new creature is formed.—"*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son.*"

4th. It is an entire change.—"*Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold*

all things are become new." As sin defiled and ruined the whole man, infecting every member of the body, and every faculty of the soul, so regenerating grace, the remedy which God has provided, extends as far as the disease. All old things are passed away, every sin, idol and lust, and vicious habit, receives a wound which in the end will issue in their inevitable death.—The saving graces of the Spirit are planted in the heart, and they shall bud and bloom and bring forth ripe fruits of glory at last.

He who is born again, not only receives new eyes, with which to behold the divine glory displayed in the works of creation and providence—new ears, with which to hear the word of life; a new tongue, for conversation on heavenly subjects—and a new understanding, to comprehend the mysteries of religion;—but, also, a new heart, with which he loves a God and his law, and embraces the truth as it is in Jesus.

5th. It is an *imperfect* change. Although every part is renewed, yet none is *perfectly* changed. As an infant, which, although possessed of all the parts of a man, has not yet attained the stature of a full grown man, so in regeneration, every power and faculty of soul and body, undergo an incomplete alteration; but shall at length be perfectly changed into the likeness of God, through the gradual advances of a life of sanctification.—Wherefore, "*As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*" And saith Paul, "*He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*" Although in regeneration, there is a heavenly light let into the mind, some darkness still remains; although the will is renewed, some small inclination to sin continues; and it will be so until that which in part is done away, and the light of glory comes. Adam was created in his full stature; but they that are born must grow up. Adam was created upright, and was therefore at once perfectly righteous; but those who are "*born again*" are imperfectly holy, and will not be perfect in holiness, until completely sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

6th. It is a *lasting* change. "*Whosoever is born of God, his seed remaineth in him.*" The soul may indeed backslide, fall from its first love, and sink into a lamentable state. But the new life it received in regeneration, shall never be lost: though Satan, the grand enemy of God and man, shall muster all the legions of hell, and exert his infernal power to the utmost, and contrive with all the corruptions of the heart, to destroy this

new principle of spiritual life, he shall not prevail; for the perfections of Jehovah are engaged for its support and preservation. As long as there is strength in the omnipotent arm of God, as long as there is love and compassion in Christ, it is impossible for the new creature to be destroyed. The life of the renewed soul "*Is hid with Christ in God:*" it is safely preserved and supported by Jesus Christ, who died to purchase eternal life for his followers, but now lives for ever more. The renovated soul shall never die, but shall be ever united to Christ.—"*For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

III. Offer some reasons from which the necessity of the new birth may appear. And, my friends, you would do well to consider the great necessity of this change.

1st. Regeneration is absolutely necessary to qualify you for the performance of those things which are truly good and pleasing in the sight of God. As long as you are strangers to the new birth, your best works are sinful, being only the production of a corrupt and depraved heart. It is true, they may be physically good, as actions, simply considered, but in a moral sense they are vile and hateful in the sight of God. How can they be otherwise, when they are performed by those at enmity with God? Should an unregenerate sinner exert every power of his soul to do service acceptable to God, he would fall infinitely short of it; for no cause can produce effects of a nature contrary to itself; neither will pure water flow from a corrupt fountain. "*Without faith,*" says the apostle, "*it is impossible to please God.*" The sinner is utterly destitute of saving faith, and therefore no act of his can please God. "*A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*" True, an unbeliever may be regular in his external walk and conversation; and be so strict in all the duties of religion, that he may appear blameless in the eyes of the world, and escape the closest scrutiny of christians; but he cannot escape the heart-searching eye of God, who looks upon his Pharisaic righteousness with detestation. Suppose his body fasting, were reduced to a skeleton, and he should pray until his lungs were worn out and his knees become like horns, unless he were born again it would be all in vain. "*For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*"

2nd. If you are not born again, all your reformations and apparent changes from profanity to morality, or from morality to a discharge of the outward duties of religion, are vain, and worse than in vain. It may be, that you have topped off the branches of the old stock, but if not born again, the root of sin still re-

mains in your hearts, strong as before, and will again spring forth with its former vigor, in defiance of all your efforts to prevent it. It may be said of you as it was of Saul, *that you are changed into another man*, yet it will be unavailing; “*For except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” Others may admire your seriousness, and the seeming importunity of your prayers, but God esteems them as the howling of a dog, and loathes them as you would an open sepulchre full of rottenness and putrefaction. “*The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.*” *He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth the lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood, he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol.*” And why? Because you are unconverted, and perform no duty from a principle of love to God, or with the design to promote his glory.

3rd. If you are not born again, all that you have done for God and his cause will profit nothing. This is plain from the example of Jehu.—He executed the vengeance of God upon the wicked house of Ahab, at his command, and therefore he was rewarded with a kingdom. Yet for this same deed, he was punished in his posterity, because he did it from wrong motives.—For says the Lord by his prophet Hosea, “*Yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezebel on the house of Jehu.*” Remember, God looks upon the heart, and if that is not right it ruins all. This is evident from the instances of Asa and Amaziah, two kings of Judah. “*The high places were not removed; nevertheless Asa’s heart was perfect, with the Lord all his days.*” Amaziah did that which was right in the sight of God, but not from a perfect heart.

Here some perhaps may object, and suppose, that if their prayers are an abomination in the sight of God, they had better cease praying altogether. This, poor sinner, is a dreadful conclusion. Because you cannot pray to divine acceptance, do you think to mend the matter by trampling upon the commands of God, which enjoin upon you prayer and every other religious duty? It is at the peril of your soul, and risk of eternal damnation, that you neglect this duty. Can you think that your carnal state will be a sufficient excuse for you at the bar of God? Will it appease the troubled conscience in a dying hour or in the flames of hell? No. It will rather prove your eternal destruction, that you are in heart enemies to God. And if you cannot pray to divine acceptance, greater cause have you to cry mightily to God to change your hearts, and give you the spirit of prayer. God commands you to pray and use the means of grace, and although he is under no obligations to you, and might with justice send you to hell even for your best works, he will bless you. Means are the channels through which

he communicates spiritual blessings to the children of men.—Others who have used the means have found God in their working for their soul's eternal benefit, and you may also find him.—Therefore, instead of being discouraged, use all means; and with greater importunity than ever, cry to God to give you a new heart, and implant a principle of holiness within you.

4th. If you are not born again, you can never hold communion with God. It is characteristic of the children of God, that they enjoy communion with him and have some sweet foretastes of that felicity which awaits them beyond death. And I dare assert, that those who have not, at certain times, had such views of the divine glory, and felt such a sense of the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, as filled them with joy and satisfaction beyond all that this world can afford, yea, such as communicated heaven to the soul, however great their pretensions to holiness, and however fair their professions, they are yet in the "*gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.*" For it is by communion with God, that the plant of holiness is nourished, and the christian derives strength and quickening grace from Christ the fountain of all spiritual influences. Hence, says John, "*Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*" But unconverted sinners can have no communion with God, because they are his enemies. Enemies to his law, they refuse to submit to his authority: they prefer the gratification of their lusts to all the glorious rewards of his grace, and choose the service of the Devil. They are the objects of Jehovah's wrath, and therefore it is impossible for them to have fellowship with him. Who would lead his enemies into his secret councils, or treat them with the kindness and affection of a father? Who would nurse the viper in his bosom? And can infinite holiness and purity embrace hellish deformity? "*What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?*" How dreadful then is the condition of Christless sinners! Poor souls! if you were sensible of your miserable situation, the very heavens would this day ring with your cries.

5th. If you are not "*born again*" you are absolutely unfit for heaven and that for several reasons. 1. God is essentially holy and stands at an infinite distance from all moral evil. He enjoys eternal happiness in the purity and rectitude of his own glorious perfections. Therefore sin, and its willing slaves, are the objects of his hatred.—"*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.*" Elsewhere God is said to be *angry with the wicked every day*, and his infinite holiness (speaking with reverence,) obliges him to banish them to an infinite distance from him. Speaking of the New Jerusalem, says John,

“There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or worketh a lie.” Besides, infinite justice armed with the flaming sword of divine vengeance, guards the gate of the paradise of God, and will not suffer unholy sinners to enter.

2nd. The unregenerate sinner would not relish the company, the occupations or enjoyments of the kingdom of God. Heaven consists in perfect holiness, in beholding, worshiping and admiring the glories and perfections of the Deity, in an uninterrupted enjoyment of the love of God. Tell me, oh ungodly sinner, what pleasure you would find in such a heaven as this? What satisfaction could you have in beholding the excellency of a Being whom you hate with all your heart? Would perfect holiness afford you any felicity, if you did not desire it? You wish to be happy, and are anxious to go to heaven; but a Mahomedan paradise—a heaven of carnal pleasures, and fleshly gratifications would suit your taste much better, than the heaven which the renewed soul hungers and thirsts for, and longs to enjoy. Now, if you would examine your hearts, conscience would tell many of you that such is the case. Have you not often found the Sabbath to be the longest day of the week, and its exercises burdensome to you? You could spend its precious hours in vain and foolish conversation: conscience bears witness that you have no relish for conversation about Christ and heaven—the exercises of the heart or the method of God’s dealing with the soul in order to prepare it for glory.

Think how burdensome and disagreeable heaven would be, if you were taken there this moment. Rather than spend an eternity in company so opposite to your nature, and be engaged in employments so unpleasant to your vitiated minds, you would leap o’er the high battlements of heaven down to the burning furnace of hell. Now, sinner, are you not convinced that you must be *“born again,”* to be qualified to enjoy true happiness? For, although you find a wretched pleasure in your present course, if God were to withdraw the restraints which he has laid upon you, a perfect hell would spring up in your hearts. You would feel the malice and enmity of the Devil boiling in your souls, against God and every thing that bears his image. The enmity of the carnal mind, and the enmity of the Devil, are the same in kind; but the one is under the control of restraining grace, the other is not. But at death restraining grace is taken away and then your hatred to the moral image and character of God, will, if your capacity admit it, be equal to that of Satan. No sinner in this condition can be permitted to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the patriarchs and apostles in the kingdom of heaven, to join the company of the

redeemed above, who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.

6th. As long as you continue in your unregenerate state, you are under the curse of God, and exposed to everlasting ruin. You may think this harsh language, but I assure you that it is not more harsh than true. Search the word of God from beginning to end, you will not find one word of peace to the sinner in his unrenewed state; but curses, threatenings and terrors. The pure and holy law of God, the transcript and nature of his perfections, and the declaration of his will, speaks no milder language than, "*Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil.*"—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."—"It shall come to pass if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket, and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out." These words, although spoken to the Israelites, may be applied to sinners of the present day; and the gospel of Christ, which abounds in encouraging promises to returning sinners, denounces your doom in language still more dreadful—"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha," i. e. accursed when the Lord comes. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of God?" "The Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." As long as you are strangers to the new birth, all the curses, terrors, and threatenings hang over your heads. The vengeance of the eternal God is gathering in a thick tempest ready to burst upon you: Jehovah seated upon the burning throne of Justice frowns upon you: bottomless hell is yawning wide to receive you: the devils are waiting the dreadful mandate, that they may sink their fiery talons into your souls and drag you to the infernal pit. Oh that you were wise, that you understood this, and would consider what would be the end of your course. Fly to Jesus while the door of mercy is

open. Fly, fly, to the ark of safety, before the deluge of God's wrath overtakes you. Turn to the strong hold, while you are yet prisoners of hope; for behold the avenger of blood is at your heels—the sword of inflexible justice is drawn and ready to be plunged into your hearts.

IV. We promised some remarks by way of improvement. If, after the strictest examination, you can prove from the testimony of God's word, that you are "*born again*;" if by looking in the mirror of the sacred scriptures, you can discover in yourselves the features of your heavenly Father; if you can appeal to God and to your own consciences, that you love what he loves, and hate what he hates—that every sin however pleasant to the carnal mind, is the plague of your life—that you love and delight in the law of God because it is his law, the copy of his holy nature and perfections, and because it strikes at the root of your besetting sins—that you love his ordinances, because in them you have often seen his smiling face; if you habitually long to be prepared for glory—to be fitted for dwelling forever in your Father's house, because neither sin nor any evil is there, but perfection in holiness, and conformity to God; if your souls are daily fed on Christ, the bread of life which came down from heaven; if you live upon him by faith, depending on him and him alone for righteousness to justify you, and for quickening, sanctifying and persevering grace; if, when you fall into sin, your consciences give you no ease until you are brought to apply to the blood of Christ:—then, praise and admire the riches of that grace which brought *you* from your lost estate, while thousands are left in sin, to become vessels of wrath and monuments of his vengeance. O consider what infinite obligations you are under to God, and to his Son Jesus Christ, who groaned and bled and died for your salvation. Who has sent the Spirit, the third person in the adorable Trinity, to bow your hard hearts and obstinate wills, to the astonishing plan of free-grace. O let your holy, self-denying lives evidence to the world that you love your heavenly Father, and delight in his law.—And for your encouragement let me tell you, it will not be long before he will send a fiery chariot, attended by holy angels, to conduct you to the Paradise of God, where you shall ever eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and drink of the rivers of pleasure, which flow at his right hand. Then you shall possess all the bliss which Jehovah designed for you from eternity, and which the blood and merits of Christ could purchase. How sweet will it be, to sit down with Christ your elder brother on the throne of his glory, whilst all doubts and fears, groans, pains, tears and sorrows, all intervening clouds, are banished to an infinite distance from you. There you shall join the church triumphant, those who have gone before, and all who shall be gathered of

Adam's race until the end of the world, in singing praises and hallelujahs to him that sits upon the throne, who redeemed you and washed you from your sins in his own blood!

And, now, unconverted sinners, let me entreat you to consider your doleful and wretched condition. Poor souls! every moment while out of Christ, you are suspended over eternal burnings, and that too by the hand of a sin-avenging God, who is angry with you every day, and you know not what moment he will suffer you to fall irrecoverably into the flames of Tophet; "*The pile thereof is much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.*" Perhaps you think but little of this matter now, and many may make a jest of all this; and, Leviathan-like, can laugh at the shaking of Jehovah's spear, which makes Devils roar, and curse, and bite their iron bands; But as God lives, the day is coming, when, in eternity, you shall lament and bewail your folly, if you continue to sleep on in security, and slight the precious seasons of grace. Some of you are postponing the important matter to a future time. Sometimes you see that your situation is dangerous; the fears of death and hell affright you, and make you seriously resolve that you will do better for the time to come; but soon these terrors wear off and you fall again into your old careless course: and, to keep conscience quiet, you flatter yourselves that you will repent and become new creatures before you die—perhaps when old, or when your frolicsome days are ended, or when you have more time and leisure from the business of the world. But, permit me to tell you, that this is not a matter of so little importance, that it should be put off to another time. How dreadful the consequence, if before that period you should die! Thousands there are at this moment in hell, howling with the damned, who as you do, put off the work of salvation and intended to become pious before death. By this means, they trifled away their day of grace and lost all the opportunities of repentance. There are some too, who, if they would permit conscience to speak, and candidly examine, might see that they never had an hour's distress or sorrow for sin, or one discovery of the glory and suitableness of the Saviour; and yet they take it for granted that all is well. They think that they will be happy at last, and yet never bring the matter under serious examination, as in the sight of the heart-searching God. They do not trouble themselves to know whether they have the marks and characters of those who are born again; but venture all upon uncertainty. They indeed trust they will attain heaven at last through the righteousness of Christ. And because God is merciful, they have no doubt but eternal life, immortal glory, and joys unspeakable, will be theirs. And pray, what foundation have they for their hopes? Nothing more than a presumptuous con-

fidence! I have heard of a madman, who claimed all the lands between the Delaware and Susquehannah, and attended courts of justice to be put in possession of his rights. But he had no evidence to support his claim, other than a vain conceit of his own crazy imagination; and upon no better foundation than this, do many, who call themselves christians, build their hopes of heaven and eternal life. If you inquire the reason of their hope, they will answer that there are but few who attain the faith of assurance, but they trust God with the concerns of their souls.—Christ died for sinners, and therefore they hope to be saved. Inquire of them about the inward exercises of their souls, their views of the abomination of their hearts, or the soul-ravishing beauty of Christ, or about their particular acquaintance with the plan of salvation, or the internal work of the Spirit of God upon their souls—you will find them as great strangers to the life and power of religion, as the Hindoo or Hottentot. Are there any of those who now hear me of this class, their case is deplorable beyond comprehension.—The flames of hell will soon convince you of your awful mistake; and it will greatly aggravate your damnation, to have been like Capernaum exalted to heaven, and after all, to awake among devils and damned ghosts in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone—where all opportunities are lost, and all seasons of grace and means of salvation are gone forever and ever! Then, I pray and beseech you, search diligently, and neither take sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, until you have come to some certainty about the state of your souls. Cry to God day and night to grant you the enlightening influences of his Spirit, to discover to you your lost and perishing condition, and to cut you off from every other refuge but Christ.

Let me entreat those, who have ever felt the spirit of God striving with them, seriously to put home to their consciences. Have I been born again? or am I yet a child of wrath and heir of hell? A person may, for a long time, feel the spirit striving with him—may feel the most piercing convictions, and yet never arrive at the new birth. Pharaoh and Simon Magus had such horrors of conscience, that they desired the prayers of others, but still they remained in the “*gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.*”

As trees often shoot and blossom fair without producing fruit, so poor sinners alarmed from their security, have been brought to see and feel the necessity of the new birth, and agonized, and cried, and prayed, and used every outward means with diligence; and yet have made shipwreck of their consciences; and have returned again to their old courses, like the “*Dog to his vomit, and the sow that has been washed to her wallowing in the mire.*” Like Cain, some have roared out under dreadful appre-

hensions of future wrath; and yet have stifled their convictions with the cares of this world—practically declaring that they esteem worldly objects, more excellent and desirable, than Christ, and all the boundless treasures of his grace. Like Ahab, others have humbled themselves and broken off from many of their sins, but went no farther. Some like Felix, have trembled at the prospect of death and judgment, but have procrastinated their return to God, and by this means have eternally perished. Others, like “*Those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of life, and the powers of the world to come,*” but who from want of a hearty consent of the soul to the terms of the gospel, have never been “*born again.*” These have miscarried and have fallen away, and thus “*crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*” Is it possible that men can feel such awakenings of conscience and strivings of the spirit upon their hearts, and still be strangers to the new birth and enemies to God?

Then, is it not a matter of infinite moment for each of you, my brethren, to examine all your past and present religious exercises? Oh may you never rest until you find evidence, sustained by the authority of God’s word, that you have been born again, children of God and heirs of glory! And if upon strict examination, your consciences tell you that the exercises of your souls, and the desires and longings of your hearts, are not after God, but the things of the world, the gratification of lusts and fleshly appetites, for heaven’s sake and for your soul’s sake, cast away your old religion, and all your false hopes, and begin anew. Fall in the dust before God, beg of him the pardon of your sins, and plead earnestly with him, by his Holy Spirit, to cut you off from all your refuges of lies, and effectually persuade you to close with Christ upon his own terms. It is much better that you should *now* see your own hypocrisy, the rotten foundation of your hopes, and cast away your pretended religion, than to sleep on in security, dreaming of heaven and eternal happiness, at last to be undeceived in the flames of hell, when God will laugh at your calamity, and devils and damned ghosts will curse and deride your folly, in coming to such torments, after having enjoyed such fair opportunities to escape.

And now, let me beseech all those, who are burdened with a sense of sin, to make no delay, but haste—fly to Christ—while the spirit is striving with you. If you quench your present convictions, and wear off your concern for your soul’s salvation, it may be that God will be provoked to pronounce of you, as of Ephraim of old,—He “*Is joined to idols, let him alone.*” “*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.*” “*My Spirit shall not always strive with*

man." Then your last state will be worse than the first; for convictions stifled harden the heart, and render it more impenetrable than ever. Therefore, I pray you to be persuaded to rise and fly for your lives, while the door of mercy is open, and God is waiting to be gracious. Why will you linger in Sodom, till the flames of divine wrath consume you? Why stay in the company of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram till you are swallowed up in the bottomless pit of hell? If you neglect this precious opportunity and reject Christ while pleading for entrance into your hearts, it may prove your everlasting ruin. Escape for your lives to Jesus Christ, who stands with open arms ready to receive you, in whom you will find complete and everlasting salvation. He will clothe you in the white robe of his righteousness, and cleanse you from all the filth and pollution of sin. He will fill you with the love of God, instead of his dreadful wrath, and give you eternal life in the immediate vision and full fruition of the everlasting God. Eternal life, sinners, is this day offered you; and the Lord Jesus Christ, who purchased it with his own blood, would with pleasure bestow it upon you. Nothing separates between your souls and Christ, but unbelief and your own unwillingness: for he has given the strongest possible proof of his willingness to receive guilty sinners like you, if they would come to him. If unwilling to save you, would he have left the bosom of his Father and all the glories of his kingdom, veil his godhead in flesh, suffer, bleed and die, that he might open a way of escape from eternal wrath?

How free and extensive are the invitations of his Gospel!—
"Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." "The Spirit and the bride say come; and let him that heareth say come; and let him that is athirst, come: and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Then, fly to Jesus, and cast yourselves at the feet of sovereign mercy, and accept of salvation. The Lord assures you of a hearty welcome. Escape to the ark of safety, 'ere the deluge of Jehovah's wrath overtake you. Flee to the city of refuge, for the avenger of blood pursues you, and the sword of justice shall divide in sunder those who delay!

S E R M O N X X V I I I .

TERMS OF DISCIPLESHIP.

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”
MATTHEW, xvi. 24.

ALL mankind are passing to the eternal world—hastening to heaven or hell—as fast as time, with his rapid flight, can bear them; every one ardent in the pursuit of happiness: a large majority desire to have all their pleasure and satisfaction in this world, while a small minority, consisting of a lonely few, are seeking happiness beyond the grave—seeking an inheritance—a kingdom, an eternal crown of unfading glory, of which the world knows nothing. Christ and the Devil are the great competitors who head these two parties. They are daily seeking volunteers, and using all means to persuade adventurers to the respective countries of their abode, on the other side of death. The Devil holds up to the view of sinners, the honors, the profits and the pleasures of the present world, the popular and fashionable vices, the indulgence of sinful pleasures, and gratification of sinful appetites. He persuades perishing mortals to make sure of these. To place all their happiness in them, and risk the things beyond the grave.—And the consequence is, that hundreds and thousands, and millions follow him. And hence it is, that whole families and neighborhoods, towns and almost entire cities, are on the broad road to hell—like Esau, selling Christ, heaven and eternal life, for a mess of pottage—willing to risk the vengeance of God and the torments of hell, for the pleasure of sin and the vanities of the world.

Jesus finds but few to enlist under his banner—but few who are willing to part with the sinful pleasures of life—to face the scoffs, the reproaches, the persecutions, and opposition of the wicked, and seek after happiness beyond the grave—a blessedness the other side of death. Jesus, the leader and captain of his

blood bought family deceives nobody. In all his gracious proposals to lost sinners, he honestly and faithfully tells them the best and the worst of his conditions. He tells those who enlist themselves under him, that in this world they shall have tribulation; that as the world hated him, so it will hate them; that if they called the master of the house Beelzebub, they of his household can expect no better treatment. He tells them, also, that they shall have genuine comfort, such pleasures, joys and consolations, as are worthy the pursuits of rational beings. The Holy Ghost, the comforter, which the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, shall dwell with them and be in them. The Father and Son shall come to them and take up their abode with them. The “*peace of God which passeth all understanding,*” shall fill their hearts, and, “*believing,*” they shall “*rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*”

These things are the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which appear like dark and unmeaning parables to those that are without. These are the things which the wisdom of the world treats as foolishness—which the wise fools of the earth, call enthusiasm and distraction, and consider too little, too mean and childish, for their *great* minds to be employed about. Christ tells each one who will enlist under his banner, that he shall have a kingdom prepared for him before the foundation of the world—that he shall reign with him upon his throne: he tells them that he has gone to prepare a place for them in his Father’s house—that he will receive them to himself—that where he is they may be also—there to behold his glory—there to possess an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory.—Joys such as “*eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.*” But all these things are treated by the world as extreme foolishness; and thousands sell their chance for them, for their balls, frolics and intoxicating cups—their carnal pleasures and the indulgence of their vitiated appetites.

In the text, Christ holds out the only terms upon which salvation may be expected. “*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.*” In these words, we have, first, the character of the genuine christian—him that is a saint indeed.—He follows Christ. To follow sometimes means to pursue the footsteps of a person who has gone before; by this means coming to the place where he is, and finding him. Sometimes it signifies, the conduct of a careful and industrious student, who loves his master—who places the highest confidence in his rules and instructions, and pursues his directions with diligence and attention. Sometimes it signifies, an exact copying the example of some amiable and respectable character. In every sense of the word it implies that Jesus has gone to heaven to prepare a place for his followers; he has mark-

ed the way with his blood and his footsteps; and all his spiritual children are walking in the “narrow” way of holiness and endeavouring to tread in his footsteps.

Jesus is the great prophet of his church. He teaches his people by his word and Spirit: and they like little children are all at his feet learning to know God and do his will—to acquire the temper and disposition of the heavenly country to which they are journeying. In some measure, they are like Christ: they bear his image, and are continually longing to be made perfect in their likeness to him. Therefore, says the apostle, “*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*” Christ is the divine pattern, which his people try to imitate in all their conduct towards God and men.

In the text are contained two things essentially necessary to our following Christ.—*We must deny ourselves, and take up the cross.* We must part with every sin and sinful pleasure, though as dear to us as a right eye, or as profitable as a right hand. The terms are—part from them, or from Christ. We must encounter every difficulty—endure all things and suffer all things for Christ or we can have no part in him.

In the farther consideration of the subject, we shall pursue the following method.—

- I. Shew what is implied in following Christ.
- II. Mention some particulars, in which every genuine christian follows him.
- III. Say something of bearing the cross, or that self-denial connected with following Christ.

I. Shew what is implied in following Christ.

1st. The *implantation of spiritual life in the soul* is implied. Following implies action, motion, volition. In a natural sense, it always supposes the existence of spiritual life. All men are, by nature, morally and spiritually dead; and, therefore, are incapable of following Christ. Says the scripture, they are “*dead in trespasses and sins.*” Spiritual death not only signifies a want of life, but consists of positive enmity and hatred to God and all his ways. “*The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*” “*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*” Unregenerate sinners in this state of spiritual death, so far from having any disposition to follow Christ, spontaneously choose the ways of sin and death, which lead to hell. Therefore, before any of the sons of men will attempt to follow Christ, they must be regenerated by the mighty power and agency of the Spirit of God.

2nd. Following Christ implies a *knowledge* of him. Nothing is more unreasonable than to suppose men would forsake all things

for an unknown object: neither will any one follow Christ, while a stranger to his beauty, his excellency and preciousness. Then, the followers of Christ have a knowledge of him—a knowledge which the greatest genius—the wisest philosopher—nor the most accomplished scholar, could ever attain by the highest exertions of their natural powers;—a knowledge which is the very essence of religion—and contains the seeds of blessedness in the heavenly state. *“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”* It is a knowledge of itself so desirable, and discovers such pleasing objects, that all other wisdom compared with it seems but foolishness. Paul, who was a wise man, an accomplished scholar, and great divine, declares that he *“determined not to know any thing”* *“save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”* And when speaking of his great natural attainments, concludes by saying, *“Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”* This knowledge is communicated to the soul by the power and agency of the Holy Spirit.—*“For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.”*

3rd. Following Christ implies *supreme love* to him—an affection for him above every other object in heaven or earth. It is contrary to common sense to suppose, that any rational man, would leave all and follow Christ, unless he loved him better than all things else. He who follows Christ loves him more than all the world—more than father and mother, brother or sister; yea, more than life itself: and his love for these is hatred when compared with his love for Christ. And this is our Lord's meaning when he says, *“If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”*

4th. It implies, also, a *disposition to please Christ—to do his will and keep his commandments*, This is the criterion laid down by himself, by which his followers may be known—*If ye love me, keep my commandments*”—*“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”*—*“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”* *“If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.* The christian is one, who following Christ endeavors to obey all his commands, and strives conscientiously to perform every duty he owes to God and man. He loves his neighbor as himself—he does to others what he would have them do to him—he loves his enemies—blesses them that curse him—and prays for them who despitefully use and persecute him.—*He worships God in spirit and in truth.* He prays with all man-

ner of prayer and supplication—and whether he eats or drinks or whatsoever he does, he does all to the glory of God.

II. Mention some particulars in which the genuine christian follows Christ.

The christian follows Christ by imitating his divine character, copying after his unparalleled example, and drinking in his spirit, temper and disposition. There are a great many little, no harm sins, about which the world tells us.—These the christian never indulges: from these things he is entirely free; and for this reason—they are not to be found in the life and character of Christ. Foolish talking and jesting, the world says, are innocent; but they are expressly forbidden by the apostle. Sabbath day amusements, surely, they say, are not sinful. There can be no harm in taking a civil game at cards, billiards or backgammon, if we play only for amusement and not for money. There is no harm in a genteel ball or dance among decent, respectable people, when managed with politeness and good order. Yes, my friends, in these things there is harm. They who practice them are in a different road from that which Christ travelled; and where he is, they never come. Christ never played cards nor backgammon; he was never in a ball room, nor at a civil dance; and I am confident that none of his followers will ever be seen in such places.

1st. Christ was the greatest example of *meekness* and *humility* the world ever saw. He ever treated earthly honors—the esteem and applause of men, with a holy contempt. When the multitude, enraptured with his divine miracles, would have taken him by force to make him king, he withdrew and hid himself. Often when he performed the most Godlike miracles, in curing the sick and relieving the distressed, he charged them to tell no man. He desired not his own glory as a man, but the glory of his heavenly Father.

In this the christian follows Christ. The true believer is humble—of a meek and lowly spirit. The more religion he enjoys, and the more he grows like Jesus, the more humble he becomes. Like the great apostle of old, he always looks upon himself as the chieftain of sinners—the least of all saints—the greatest wonder of divine grace: assenting to the divine precept, he esteems every other christian better than himself. When he has just conceptions of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus, he feels himself less than nothing, and vanity. He is struck with wonder and astonishment, that eversuch a crawling worm of the dust should have found mercy.

2nd. Christ delighted to do the will of his Father. God's law was written on his heart. He tells us that it was his meat and drink to do his Father's will. In this too, the genuine christian follows his Lord and Master. The love of God is sweeter to the taste of his renewed heart, than honey dropping from the comb.

He has seen every sin exhibited, in all its horrid, hellish malignity—in its dreadful God-dishonoring and Christ-crucifying nature. Therefore, he hates sin, in some degree, as God hates it. He sees the law to be so holy, so pure—such a perfect transcript and image of the moral attributes of God—that he loves it and delights in it from his inmost soul. He hungers and longs to be conformed to it. The heaven which his soul pants and thirsts to obtain, is perfect holiness—perfect likeness to God and conformity to his law. Hence it is that the christian cannot love or practice any known sin, or live in the neglect of any duty which God commands.

3rd. Christ possessed the most gracious and benevolent disposition toward mankind. His whole life was spent in doing good—in conferring blessings spiritual and temporal upon the sons of men. He healed the sick, relieved the distressed, and taught mankind, by precept and example, their duty to God and man. Well, inasmuch as the genuine christian partakes of the spirit of Christ, he imitates him in this also. The follower of Jesus loves the whole human race, and regards with feelings of benevolence and compassion even his most malignant and inveterate enemies. He loves his neighbor as himself. He embraces every opportunity of doing good to his fellow-creatures—to feed the hungry—to clothe the naked—and relieve the distressed.

4th. Christ was *truth*: there was no guile found in his mouth.—The same disposition exists in all his followers. The true believer ever speaks the truth, to his fellow-men without deceit or dissimulation. In all his dealings—in all his contracts and commercial intercourse with the world, he chooses to suffer losses, wrongs and injury, rather than depart from the truth or use the smallest deception.

5th. Christ was free from all malice, hatred and revenge. He possessed in the highest degree the spirit of forgiveness. When "*he was reviled, he reviled not again.*" He pitied and wept over his most malicious enemies. He prayed for the pardon of his blood thirsty murderers, and that too, while sporting with his groans, and mocking his agonies. And he enjoined this gospel precept upon all his followers—"*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*"—And all true believers have the same spirit of forgiveness—the same gentle and benevolent disposition, in some degree, that was in Christ.

6th. Christ was fervent, importunate and diligent in the exercise of prayer. He not only prayed openly as a public teacher, and socially with his disciples, but it seems also to have been his practice to pray in secret; and sometimes to spend whole nights in wrestling with God in prayer. True christians follow Christ in this particular.—*They are all praying persons: they pray in*

their families, with the utmost importunity: they spend much time in secret prayer: they have weighty and important cases of others to carry to a prayer-hearing God, and many bitter complaints and painful petitions of their own to bring to a throne of divine grace: they cry to God vehemently, for their ungodly families, who are on the broad road to hell: they plead for the prosperity of Zion: they lift their voices to him in ardent supplication for the world of mankind that lieth in wickedness. In such cases, they wrestle with God, they plead his promises and can take no denial; and, indeed, it would be nothing strange if they should spend whole nights in prayer as Christ did.

Lastly. Christ was absorbed in the will of God. In all his addresses to his Father, even in his greatest difficulties, his language is, *Father, not my will, but thine be done.* This the christian imitates also and shows himself a follower of Christ. When in the narrow way, walking in the footsteps of Jesus, let their trials and difficulties be ever so great, the language of their inmost souls is, Lord, thy will be done.

I will give you now, a short synopsis of the christian's character. He is a heaven-born soul—he has felt the pangs of the new birth—he has entered the strait gate of conversion. He can give a reason for his hope, and tell what great things the Lord has done for his soul. He has the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, in his soul, which is eternal life. God, the Father, by his Spirit has revealed to his heart Jesus, in his person, in his offices, and in all his mediatorial glory, fullness and suitableness. He loves Christ with all his heart—more than the dearest relations on earth—more than his own life. He loves the law of God—he delights to obey his command and do whatsoever pleases him. He is an humble creature: like a little child, he is ever at the feet of Jesus, willing to be taught and desiring to know more and more concerning him. He is a loving and benevolent creature: he loves all men: he loves the people of God, because they bear the image of Christ—speak the language of the heavenly Canaan—and are brothers and sisters in Christ, and are travelling with him to the paradise of God. He loves the poor unconverted—he loves and pities even his worst enemies: he feels benevolence and compassion towards them, and prays for them, and weeps in secret for them, and desires their salvation as he does his own. He is free from all malice, ill will, and revenge. He cannot indulge such hellish feelings as these towards any of the human race. He is possessed of a gentle and forgiving spirit. He renders not evil for evil; but repays evil with good. He is a praying creature. Spiritual prayer is the very breath of the heaven born soul—and in all things he delights to do his heavenly Father's will.

III. We will now say something of bearing the cross or self-denial, which is indispensably connected with following Christ.

The terms upon which depends the salvation or damnation of every one of Adam's race, are these: Deny yourself, take up the cross and follow Christ—Obey and you shall be saved. Refuse these terms, and eternal misery and death, are the consequence. Multitudes would be willing to follow Christ, if it would advance their popularity, or gain them the applause of the world. But it is so far from this, that Christ has told his followers that they "*shall be hated of all men*" for his "*name's sake*"; that if the world hated him it would hate them also.—Many would wish to follow Christ, if they could gain the riches, and pleasures of the world by it. But it is very far from this. Christ has promised that in this world, his followers shall have tribulation; for, says he, "*if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*" The question then, is—Of what must we deny ourselves, if we would follow Christ?

1st. We must deny ourselves of the love and practice of every sin and every sinful pleasure, though as dear as a right eye or hand. We must deny ourselves of all our *little* sins—our Sunday visits and amusements—our genteel balls—harmless frolics and dances—our horse-racing—billiards and black-gammon. We cannot follow Christ and take these along. We must part with all these little innocent sins, or part with Christ. We may say, I think, or I don't think so; but if we follow Christ, it must be as he thinks.

If we would follow Christ, we must deny ourselves of every lawful comfort and enjoyment, so far, as that comfort and enjoyment becomes our idol. If we love father or mother, more than Jesus, he and we must part. If we love husband or wife, or the tender infant, more than Christ, or even ourselves, Christ and we must part. He must be "*all and in all*" in our hearts and affections, or else we cannot follow him.

But again—Many would be willing to follow Christ, if the cross were not in the way. By the cross, we understand all that contempt, reproach, persecution, and sufferings which christians have to endure for Christ's sake. This appears more terrible to the unconverted than death. Therefore, hundreds and thousands part with Christ, rather than bear the cross.—Young people are often convinced of the necessity of religion. Their consciences tell them that all is wrong, that living and dying in their present condition, hell must be their portion.—They would deny themselves and follow Christ, but when it comes to the point, the cross is too heavy. To bear the reproaches, the insults and ridicule, of their vain wicked companions, appears insurmountable. This is a solemn crisis—

they are about to make choice for eternity—either to take the cross and follow Christ, or part forever with Christ and go to hell with their wicked companions. Others are almost persuaded to start for heaven, but the cross seems intolerable. I would be willing, say they, to seek religion and follow Christ, but my parents think it would ruin my character. My father and mother would be as much distressed to see me a praying penitent or an humble christian; as if I were to become the object of public odium and disgrace. The opposition of my parents is too strong—the cross is too heavy. But remember, here is the turning point. You must either take up the cross and follow Christ, or go to hell with your parents. Says another, I feel strong desires to serve God, but my husband has no taste for religion, and would wish me to follow the popular vices and sinful amusements of the world. My wife cannot bear the thought of my becoming a praying and despised follower of the Lord Jesus, and publicly owning Christ before all men. I feel the cross too heavy to be borne. Recollect your salvation depends upon the decision you now make. If you take up the cross and follow Christ, you shall have eternal life; if you deny Christ and refuse to bear the cross, you must be damned in hell, with your wicked husband or wife.

In the sixteenth century, at the commencement of the Reformation, Galeacus Carraccolus, Marquis of Vico, a nobleman of immense wealth and popularity, embraced religion, and fell in with the doctrines of the reformation. But living in a country where he could never hear the gospel preached in its purity, and where it would be at the risk of his life for him to espouse the doctrines of the reformation, he withdrew privately from his family, and went to Geneva, where he lived in great obscurity; but enjoyed much comfort to his soul under the preaching of the celebrated John Calvin. After several years, he paid his family a visit. His wife and children, his aged parents, relations and acquaintances were overjoyed to see him. Every argument was used by his friends, but especially his wife and parents to persuade him to renounce his religion, and stay with his family. They held up to him his popular character, his immense wealth, and the high honors and dignities which he possessed. They set before him the poverty and obscurity which he must endure at Geneva. They plead the unspeakable grief and distress his conduct would bring upon his affectionate wife, his tender children, and his aged parents, if he should forever forsake them. Finding that flesh and blood could not withstand the temptations which were every day placed before him, he concluded that rather than be tempted, to deny Christ, he would hasten his departure. The solemn and trying time, at length came, when he should take his last fare-

well of his family. His aged father and mother, when all arguments and entreaties failed to detain him, cursed him by every thing sacred and dreadful—and loaded him with the most bitter and cruel anathemas. His loving wife, bathed in tears, and almost distracted, clasped her arms around his neck, and with cries of wo, asked him if the tender husband, the partner of her life, with whom she had spent so many happy years, could be so cruel as to desert her forever. His daughter seized him round the knees, and with vehement outcries, asked him, if the affection of a father could be deaf to the cries of his child. Says she, I came from your bowels—I am part of yourself—can you be so cruel as to desert me forever? Relating the passage, he says, "Now I felt my very bowels melt within me—the current of natural affection ran so strong that I was almost overcome." This was the critical moment. He must deny his family or Christ; there was no alternative. But Christ he would not forsake. He sprang with violence—his wife and daughter still clinging to him, and forced his way—but had even to trample them under his feet before he could extricate himself from them.

Consider what dreadful crosses many of the humble followers of Christ have borne—what sufferings they have endured for his sake. Read the history of the ten persecutions under the pagan emperors of Rome. Many of them were clothed in the skins of wild beasts, whilst dogs were set upon them, who tore them in pieces. Many of them wrapped in sheets, were dipped in pitch and tied to stakes about the amphitheatres—and there set on fire in the night, to give light to the profane multitudes engaged in their infernal plays. Some had their flesh cut off with knives, piece by piece, from their bones, beginning at the extremities of their bodies; so that before their vitals were touched, they were nearly reduced to skeletons.—Read the sufferings of the people of God in Scotland, in the reigns of James II, and Charles II, when, by the conventicle law, not more than six persons durst be seen together under pain of death; when they durst not meet on the Sabbath in the stated places of public worship; but were obliged to meet in the mountains—in thickets and desert places: while companies of lighthorse were riding about to search for them and when discovered, to shoot them, or drag them to prisons, and then to be hanged or beheaded; while many of them were first tortured in the most inhuman manner: their thumbs screwed off—their legs put into iron boots and wedged until the bone was shivered to pieces.

Would we not have very small worshiping congregations in Henderson county, if every person who went to meeting on the Sabbath, went at the risk of being shot down, or thrown into a dungeon, or hanged, beheaded or tortured to death?

SERMON XXIX.



NATURE AND NECESSITY OF FAITH.



“But without faith it is impossible to please him.” HEBREWS,
xi, 6.



The great object of the apostle in this epistle, is, to shew the vast superiority of the gospel, above the legal or typical dispensation. And he establishes this, by shewing that Christ, the glorious antitype, had actually come, and by the sacrifice of himself had fulfilled and accomplished every tittle to the Mosaic dispensation—that new life and immortality were brought to light—a full and complete salvation provided—and that all things were now ready on God’s part. In the tenth chapter he urges the necessity of faith as the great interesting means, by which lost sinners of Adam’s race, can be made partakers of the blessings and benefits of Christ’s sacrifice and death. In this, he defines the nature of faith, and descends to plain matters of fact, to illustrate its excellency and divine efficiency. *“Faith, says he, “is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*

The pious Erskine, remarking upon this passage, says, that as a man looks upon his bonds, his deeds, and patents, and other unquestionable securities, though they are but pieces of paper or parchment, yet they are the substance, and sure evidence to him, of genuine wealth and property. So the true believer—the genuine christian, looks upon God’s covenant—his word and promises, as the sure and unquestionable evidence of his obtaining an eternal, never-fading crown of glory—a kingdom that was prepared for him before the foundation of the world—an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that never fades away.

He then proceeds to enumerate a long catalogue of eminent worthies among the Old Testament saints, who effected many and wonderful exploits by the life and exercise of this precious

grace of faith. He tells us that it was by the exercise of faith, that the sacrifice of Abel was accepted, and his person accounted righteous before God; while Cain and his offering were rejected. He next informs us, that the piety and holiness of Enoch—his walking with God—the life of sanctification in his soul refining into the perfection of blessedness—and his translation to the heavenly world were the fruits, effects, and consequences of a living faith. The argument which he offers to establish the doctrine, is that before his translation he had this testimony; that he pleased God. As if he should say, if he pleased God, then, faith in Jesus Christ must have been the source of his holy walk with God; for in the words of the text, he draws this conclusion—“*Without faith it is impossible to please him.*”

In these words are two things worthy of observation: 1st. Faith, the faith of God’s elect, the radical grace which receives Christ, feeds upon him, and unites the soul to him: that faith which is the instrumental cause, by which the life of grace is implanted in the soul—by which it is nourished and supported, and by which it ripens into the life of glory. 2nd. What is predicated of this faith. It pleases God; it chooses the very way, and acts upon the very plan, which brings the highest tribute of glory to all the attributes of God. Faith grasps and holds fast by the incarnate God; it feeds and lives upon his meditation and atonement; it delights in the law of God, and to do his will. From Christ’s fullness, it daily draws aid to perform the divine commands, from proper motives, and to right ends. Therefore, without this faith it is impossible to please him.

In attending to the farther discussion of this subject, we shall

I. Speak of faith—its nature and operations.

II. Prove the assertion in the text, “*Without faith it is impossible to please him.*”

I. We are to speak of faith. 1st. Faith in Jesus Christ, the faith of God’s elect, which is more precious than gold, and which pleases God, is not a simple belief of the written word and promises of God, by the exertion of our natural powers, as many presumptuously assert: such a faith the formalist hypocrite and devils may possess. Like the altar Paul saw on Mars’ hill dedicated to the “UNKNOWN GOD;” such a faith has an unknown Christ for its object, and therefore cannot be the faith that pleases God.

2nd. The faith in Christ which pleases God, is not what some call a faith of evidence, which may give such an assent to the truth of the Bible as may alarm conscience, and excite to some partial reformations. Such a faith as this, had Judas, Simon Magus, and other reprobates; and the apostle James tells us, “*the devils also believe and tremble.*”

3rd. It is not what divines have called, *temporary faith*; such as the stoney ground hearers had. In this case, we see something like faith, yet possessing nothing of its essence.—They heard the word with joy—received it gladly—for a time it influenced their lives and conduct—they made a flaming profession of religion—felt great joy and pleasure in its duties—and for a while could not be distinguished from the genuine followers of Christ; yet the faith which pleases God never existed in their hearts. This is evident from our Lord's declaration—“*Because they had no root, they withered away:*” that is, they had no spiritual life in them; therefore, when persecution, tribulation, and strong temptations came, they forsook Christ and turned back into the world.

Some persons pretend to say, that there is no description or definition of faith in scripture, separate from the simple belief, that the scriptures are true, and that Christ is the son of God; that every idea of saving faith wrought in the soul by the power and agency of the Spirit of God, is groundless and unscriptural. Permit me to inquire, if any distinction can be made upon scriptural principles, between *head* and *heart* religion. The same distinction I apprehend can be made, between a faith of the head, and a faith of the heart. In the twelfth chapter of John, we are told of some that believed in Christ, but did not confess him before the world; because “*they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*” This could not have been the faith of the elect which pleases God.

Many, again, believed on him, and were called his disciples too; but when he preached spiritual, soul-searching doctrine to them, *that except they ate his flesh and drank his blood, they had no life in them;* they were offended and forsook him, and “*walked no more with him.*” These certainly were destitute of genuine faith.

But how did it come to pass, that Simon Peter did not forsake him and go away with the rest? The reason was, he had that faith which pleases God. When our Lord proposes to the twelve—“*Will ye also go away?*” Simon Peter answers, “*Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God.*” How did Peter's faith arrive at this knowledge? The Lord Jesus himself tells us. Christ asks of his disciples—“*But whom say ye, that I am?*” And Simon Peter answered and said, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* And Jesus answered and said unto him, *Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*”

James tells us of a *dead* and a *living faith.* A “*faith without works,*” that is dead; but a living faith manifests its heaven born nature by works of obedience.

How different was the faith of Simon Magus, from that of Lydia. He believed and was baptized; but presently he provoked by the blackest evidences, that he was "*in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.*" But Lydia's was the faith that pleased God; for when she believed, the Lord opened her heart.

One distinguishing characteristic of saving faith held out in scripture, is, *a believing with the heart*: "*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.*" Said the eunuch, "*See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.*" From all which it is evident that faith contains, not only the clear and full conviction of the unquestionable certainty of divine truth, but also the heart's choice of it. The understanding is convinced of the truth of God's precious word—of the divinity and satisfaction of Christ—his sufficiency, suitableness and willingness to save; and, at the same moment, the heart chooses him—receives him—delights in him, and confides its all to him. And hence it is, that the lively exercise of faith, and divine joy and comfort are inseparably connected. Says Peter, "*Believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*" This is evident also from plain facts. The eunuch, when he believed in Christ, went on his way rejoicing; the jailor when he received Christ rejoiced in God, with all his house.

Since the world has been filled with definitions of faith—some orthodox, and others extremely absurd and unscriptural; perhaps the surest definitions of it, are those which the Spirit of God has given in the word of truth.

1st. It is a *receiving of Christ*, as a beggar receives alms, or any one a free and unmerited gift.—"*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*"

2nd. *A flying to Christ*, in allusion to the man slayer under the law, who fled to the city of refuge, as his only hope of escaping the avenger of blood. Therefore, by the apostle it is styled a fleeing "*for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*"

3rd. It is termed a *looking to Christ*: in reference to the serpent-stung Israelites, who looked upon the brazen serpent fixed on a pole in the midst of the camp, and found immediate relief. "*Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth.*" "*They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.*" *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.*"

4th. It is termed the soul's *feeding upon Christ*: eating him and drinking his blood, as may be seen at large in John vi. which plainly intimates that the believing soul, by faith, does as

really take hold of Christ and use him for all the purposes of salvation, as the hungry man receives and eats food.

Our Westminster divines define faith to be, “a saving grace whereby we receive Christ and rest upon him for all the purposes of our salvation.” According to this definition, there are three things contained in the idea of faith, viz. 1st. The soul’s seeing Christ, or receiving him in his word and promises; 2nd. The heart’s choosing, acquiescing and delighting in the terms upon which he is offered; 3rd. The soul’s trusting, resting and relying upon him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

Faith also implies, a deep and solemn conviction of sin; a knowledge of God; and that the will chooses him.

But before we dismiss the subject, we will make a few observations upon the nature and exercise of faith.

1st. Faith is not an occasional act which takes place in the believer’s life, in the hour of conversion to God, when he first lays hold on Christ for salvation; but is an abiding principle which runs through every part of the life of sanctification. As the infant lives upon its mother’s breast, and derives its whole nourishment, support, and daily growth from her, so, faith lives and depends, daily, upon Christ for righteousness and strength, and for constant supplies of divine grace, by which the soul grows from strength to strength, until it arrives at the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. This is the meaning of the apostle when he says, *“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

2nd. Faith is the bond which unites the believing soul to Christ; as the branch is united to the vine; or as the body and its members are united to the head. It is the eye by which the soul views the king in his beauty—that sees Christ in all his offices. It is the hand of the soul, that takes hold of Christ in his word and promises, and applies him to the heart, in all its needy cases and circumstances. In a word, faith is the feet of the soul which keeps it daily travelling between its own emptiness and depravity, and the boundless fullness and sufficiency of Christ. Every step of the christian’s pious walk with God—every act of holy obedience—every victory he gains over sin and the world and every pious breathing of the heart after God and holiness, springs from the living exercise of faith in the blood of Christ; and, hence it is, that our Lord tells his disciples. *“Without me ye can do nothing.”* And says Paul, *“I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.”* Indeed, *“without faith it is impossible to please God.”*

II. We are now to prove that it is impossible to please God without faith.

Multitudes in the present day, boast that they are good men—good citizens—good neighbors—good members of society;—they are just and honest—charitable and benevolent: they boast a thousand good actions which they have done, and if they are not saved, the Lord pity the world. But they will tell you, that regeneration, conversion, or a sensible experience of the pardoning love of God, is a dark mystery to them—they know nothing about it. Let all such good characters—good actions and flattering hopes of heaven—be brought to the law and the testimony; let them be weighed in the balances, and they will be found wanting.—For the God of truth hath declared; “*Without faith it is impossible to please him.*”

Many presume to say, that all actions of the unconverted and all their duties, if materially good, are pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God.—But if the Bible be true, the Judge of quick and dead says differently.—“*Without faith it is impossible to please him.*” And this solemn assertion it is now our business to prove.

1st. The soul void of faith is dead, morally and spiritually dead—“*Dead in trespasses and sins.*” Therefore, it is as much incapable of actions spiritually good, and pleasing to God, as the dry bones scattered over the valley, of reanimating themselves and performing the actions of living men. Desperate wickedness, and the unconquerable enmity of the heart, are the causes of this spiritual death or moral inability, that unfit the unregenerate soul to perform actions acceptable to God.

The soul or spiritual part of man, is called in scripture the heart, inasmuch as it is to the whole man, what the heart is to the body. The heart is the spring of all animal motion, and the soul the source of spiritual motion. From it proceed all wickedness and depravity. Says our Lord; “*Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.*”

Such is the description given of the hearts of all unregenerate sinners, by God himself; therefore, all their thoughts, words and actions, must be sinful in his sight.—For a polluted fountain cannot send forth pure water, and says the wise man, “*the ploughing of the wicked is sin.*” That is, even the best actions of the unrenewed man are sinful and abominable to God.

2nd. The soul destitute of faith cannot please God, because unbelief is the ruling principle of all its actions; and therefore, instead of pleasing, these actions offer the highest affront to the eternal God; for they declare him to be a liar, and treat him with the lowest contempt.

Faith is the predominant principle in the believer's soul; it gives the highest honor to all the attributes of God; it ever chooses and delights in the very plan of salvation, which presents the most lovely and glorious display of all the divine perfections. But unbelief the direct opposite, or total want of faith, treats with disdain the divine laws and authority—treats Christ, the co-equal and co-eternal Son of God, the unspeakable gift of God, the Father, with all the salvation and everlasting blessedness which he has purchased by his bloody sufferings and dying agonies, it treats all this as too contemptible and degrading for its notice; yea, every thought, word and action of the sinner out of Christ—and under the power of unbelief, are so many acts of the most hostile rebellion against God, and aim at nothing less than to blot out his love, extinguish his glory, and annihilate his Being. An awful demonstration this of the truth of the apostle's declaration, "*Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*"

And now, let us notice some objections which may be made to this doctrine.

1st. If this doctrine be true—that *without faith it is impossible to please God*—and if every action which is not of faith is sin; if the sinner is morally and spiritually dead, and altogether unable to please God—incapable of believing and coming to Christ of himself,—then is he not excusable while living in sin and wickedness? Is not inability a great reasonable excuse? To this I answer—that if the inability were natural, then there would be some color of excuse; but the sinners' inability is moral, and therefore desperate wickedness—positive enmity against God. Of course, then, it can be no excuse.—Suppose a master were to order his servant to yoke the plough, and plough an acre of ground in a day, and this servant had both hands and feet cut off; and therefore, wanting all power to do so.—This would be natural inability and a reasonable excuse. But suppose the same task were given a servant, who had hands and feet and when his master would go to the field to see what he had done, and should find that he had not attempted the task—and when he asks the servant why he had not performed so reasonable a command, he would reply, I hated you with such a perfect hatred, that I had no will or disposition to do any thing which pleases you. On the contrary, it is my delight to do whatsoever vexes and grieves you. So great is my enmity against you, that I could not, and would not, do what you had commanded me. This is moral inability—this is the sinner's inability, and his *cannot*, is just *he will not*. And is such inability an excuse for sin? Is it not rather an aggravation of its guilt?

Were a murderer brought before the court to be tried for shedding his neighbor's blood, and were he to tell the judge, I hated my neighbor—such was my malice and enmity against

him—that I could not forbear taking his life—think you this would excuse him? Nay, it would greatly aggravate his case. The sinner's inability, then, so far from securing him from the penalty of the law, will prove the provoking cause of his damnation.

2nd. If it be true that without faith it is impossible to please God—if the sinner has no will to serve God—no power to forsake sin or to believe and come to Christ—what encouragement has he to attempt to do any thing? I will tell you what he should do, and what God requires of him. He should exert all his powers in the use of the means appointed and given him. He has natural power to go to a ball and dance and frolic with the wicked—he could, by exerting the same power—stay at home, pray, and read the word of God. He can go to the tavern and get drunk—and he could also go to the house of God and hear the gospel preached. He has the power to call upon the Most High to damn his soul in hell—and he could easily cry to God for mercy and beseech him for the forgiveness of his sins. The sinner has the same natural power to forsake wicked company—and his outbreaking sins—to pray and seek religion—as he has to plough the ground and plant his corn.

But here his daring wickedness evinces his moral inability. He *will* go into wicked company—he *will* attend balls and frolics—he *will* neither pray nor read the Bible—he *will* not keep the Sabbath, neither will he attend the preaching of the word; therefore his damnation is just—his blood lies at his own door.

3rd. But, says the sinner—If I believed that “*without faith it was impossible to please*” God,—that “*whatever is not of faith is sin*”—that my best prayer and duties were sinful,—then I would never pray and seek religion.

To this I will answer—if ever you get the eyes of your understanding opened to see your heart to be, as God's word describes it—if ever you are brought to feel to your inmost soul that your best prayers and duties are wickedness in the sight of God,—then is the time you will begin to pray—then your cries for mercy will pierce the very heavens.

4th. But, says the sinner, does God command me to pray when I have no faith, and when all my prayers are sin? Does he command me to believe, when I have no more power to exercise faith, than to create a world, and yet declares that I shall be damned if I do not believe? Does God command impossibilities, and damn me for not doing that, which I have no power to do? The carnal heart boils with the enmity of a devil at this.

I answer—God commands nothing unjust or unreasonable.—He is the righteous Lord and Sovereign of the Universe; he is a right to command, and it is our duty to obey. Our inability

caused by our own sin, and is no excuse for disobedience. Has not the creditor a right to demand his own—even when the debtor, by dissipation and extravagance, has wasted all his property and has nothing to pay!

But again, Jehovah demands nothing unreasonable. He commands the sinner to pray—to repent and believe in Christ.—But he offers his almighty power to enable him to perform all that he commands. He directs the sinner to the use of the means which he has appointed; and to the use of these he has annexed the most gracious and encouraging promises. But the sinner will not use these means—he will not try to obey the commands of God; and therefore, all the dreadful impossibilities lie not in God; but are chargeable to the horrid, hellish enmity and wickedness of the sinner's heart—and of course, through all eternity, it will appear just, that he that will not believe shall be damned.

SERMON XXX.

NATURE AND TENDENCY OF UNBELIEF.

“He that believeth not shall be damned.” MARK, xvi. 16.

THIS chapter is the conclusion of the most interesting and important history, penned since the commencement of time. It contains the incarnation, the humiliation, the bloody death, the triumphant resurrection, and glorious ascension, of the Son of God. Here we see the accomplishment of the designs, or the eternal counsel of the Godhead. Here we behold the free and unmerited love of God displayed in the purchase of a complete salvation of men and angels, and all the attributes and perfections of Deity, meet in universal harmony. Mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, salute each other in perfect accordance. The door of hope is opened through which pardon, salvation and eternal life may be communicated to guilty, wretched and hell deserving rebels. The price of the sinner's ransom is paid, and the holy and inflexible justice of God has received complete satisfaction, in the rich streams of Divine blood. The gate of Paradise is no longer shut—no flaming cherub or avenging sword obstructs the passage. The marriage supper of the Lamb is prepared. The servants are sent out in every direction—through the lanes and streets—the hedges and highways, that lead to hell to call and invite poor lost sinners—to tell them to come for all things are now ready—to urge and entreat them and if possible compel them to come.

Our Lord having finished his mediatorial work upon Earth—having instructed and ordained his apostles, and furnished them with all gifts and graces necessary to their arduous and important duties—and being just ready to ascend to his native heaven, to fill the mediatorial seat at the right hand of the Father,—commands them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. And then, in the verse of which our text is part, he informs them of the solemn and awfully important consequences, of receiving, or rejecting the offers of mercy, salva-

tion, and eternal life.—“*He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*”

Our subject naturally divides itself into two particulars—unbelief, and its tremendous consequences---irrecoverable damnation. Then in the discussion of the subject we shall

I. Speak of unbelief, its nature and tendency.

II. Say something of that damnation, which is its inevitable consequence.

I. We are to speak of unbelief, its nature and tendency.

Unbelief is the rejecting of truth, and treating it as falsehood. It is refusing to examine the force of evidence, and rejecting the light of testimony. It is the direct opposite of faith, which is defined in scripture to be a receiving of Christ. “*But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God.*” Unbelief then is the rejecting Christ. Faith is called coming to Christ. “*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden.*” “*Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*” Unbelief is the running away, or turning the back upon Christ. Faith gives full credence to the report, which God gives of his Son. It is the full assent and consent of the heart to the truth of the word of God. “*He that receiveth his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true.*” Unbelief then is the treating the Lord Jesus Christ as a deceiver and impostor, and the God of truth as a liar; and the rejecting all the truths of the scriptures. Faith chooses the Lord Jesus as the most amiable, glorious and lovely object in heaven or earth; unbelief treats him as one, mean and contemptible—altogether unworthy the esteem and affection of the heart. Unbelief always suggests the idea, that the truths of the gospel are sufficiently attested, by the best evidence; and this evidence, it either treats with contempt and inattention, and will not investigate, nor try to examine: or else the pride, prejudice and enmity of the heart are such, that it rejects the evidence in opposition to the light, and regards the truths of God as lies and falsehood. This we will try to illustrate from plain matter of fact.

1st. The example we will introduce, is that of the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness. The apostle Paul says they could not enter into the promised land, because they were unbelieving. “*But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness. And to whom swear he that they should never enter into his rest, but to them that believe not? So we see, that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*” The promise of God, who cannot lie, had been pledged, times without number, for ages and generations, that he would put the seed of Abraham in possession of the land of Canaan; that he would go before them, subdue their enemies drive out the Canaanitish nations. What better evidence

could they have desired, than the word of God—the promise of the Sovereign of the universe? But this was not all.—They had witnessed the signs and wonders, that he wrought in Egypt—They had seen the Red Sea divided, contrary to the established laws of nature, and had actually passed through it on dry land, while Pharaoh and his mighty host were overwhelmed and drowned in its billows: they were led by a pillar of cloud by day, and by a pillar of fire by night—they were fed by bread, miraculously rained from heaven, and their clothing waxed not old.—Therefore, it seems they had not only the word and promise of the God of truth, but also unquestionable demonstrations of his almighty power to perform what he had promised. But what was their conduct, when the spies returned with an evil report concerning the good land—when they told them of the warlike nations of Canaan—their walled cities and the mighty giants whom they would have to encounter? They murmured and repined—they rebelled against God—disbelieved his promises—and forgot all the miracles he had worked for their benefit. They were afraid to face the giants and warlike nations of the land. They mistrusted the Omnipotent Arm which delivereded them from Pharaoh's host, and brought them dry shod through the sea; and therefore they resolutely determined to return again into Egypt: and for this cause the eternal God swore in his wrath, that they should never enter into his rest.—Therefore, says the apostle, "*they could not enter in because of unbelief.*"

2nd. The next example we shall mention, is that of the unbelieving Jews, when Christ appeared in the flesh. Though all the prophecies of the Old Testament, and all the types and sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation, had their full and complete accomplishment in him; though his Godhead, his Divinity, and Messiahship were demonstrated to their external senses, by the most plain, convincing and incontestable evidence; though he spake as never man spake, and did works which no other man could do; though he healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out devils, opened the eyes of the blind, walked upon the waves of the sea, and commanded winds and storms and raging tempests, and they obeyed him;—yet the Jews would not believe. Although it was proven by indisputable evidence, that he was the Son of God, they treated him with more contempt than if he had been the basest malefactor; though undeniable testimony proved him to be the very Christ, the true Messiah and Saviour of the world, they treated him as an impostor and deceiver; though his heavenly doctrines brought life and immortality to light, and discovered to a lost and ruined world the only door of mercy, they rejected them as lies and falsehoods.—Such were the pride, the prejudice, and malignant enmity of their hearts,

that in spite of reason and the awful consequences of such conduct, they resisted the clear light of evidence, maliciously refusing to be convinced. Though he pitied and wept over them, courted and entreated them with bowels of tenderness and compassion, yet they despised and rejected him—they preferred before him a thief and murderer, and at length imbrued their hands in his blood.

What were the consequences of this base and irrational conduct? For eighteen hundred years they have been banished from God—cast out as a curse and derision to the view of the world—scattered to the four winds of heaven, among all the nations of the earth, as a standing monument of the wrath and displeasure of a dreadful, sin avenging God.

3rd. The next example of unbelief which we shall produce, is that of deists and infidels of the present day, who reject and despise Christ and his salvation, heaven and eternal life, wilfully shutting the door of mercy against themselves; and that too, in opposition to the noon-day splendor of the light of evidence.

There is no subject which the human mind has investigated, that is supported by more clear, convincing, and undeniable evidence, than the divine authority of the Bible, the certainty of divine revelation, and the blessed reality of the religion of Jesus Christ. Would the infidel, like an honest inquirer after truth, read and study the Bible without prejudice; would he, upon manly and honorable principles, investigate the evidence on each side of the question; would he act fairly upon what he hypocritically pretends to be his great and governing principle, viz. like one honestly searching for truth, follow the dictates of reason with candid and unbiased mind;—he would find the light and evidence clear, convincing and irresistible, and be compelled by the force of the testimony, to believe the Bible, and embrace the religion of Jesus Christ.

But such is the enmity of the infidel's heart, against God and holiness, that he hates the Bible above every other book in the world. Its heavenly doctrines and precepts, and the strict holiness of heart and life, which it requires; are so contrary to his nature, that he cannot endure it. He had no taste or relish for it. A jest book, novel, play or romance, or any thing else, is infinitely more pleasing to his vitiated and depraved heart. All the while he does not wish to believe the Bible, were he to admit its truth. His conscience, like a never dying worm would be gnawing and tormenting him every moment. It would tell him, that he must either part with his sinful pleasures and practices, or burn in hell forever. Therefore, he tries not to believe the Bible. He secretly hopes and wishes that it may not be true. He has such a hatred and dislike to it that he rarely reads it; and when he does, he is endeavoring to find some-

thing which may be twisted and strained into contradiction of itself. He hunts up, and stores his mind with every thing, which looks like a plausible argument against it. These he speaks of with pleasure, upon all occasions. He collects all the profane and ridiculous jests, about particular things, in the Bible.—These, glossed over with strokes of lively wit, are freely used by him when among his profane companions, for the purpose of creating laughter and diversion, especially if a sober exemplary christian is present, whom he supposes to chagrin and wound by his profanity. He never wishes to make himself acquainted with the Bible, but carefully shuns, the force of its evidence.

Thus, the poor infidel works out his own damnation, with greater diligence and industry to make sure of the way to hell, than the persevering christian, to make sure of heaven and eternal life. By unbelief he shuts, and bars, and seals, the door of mercy against himself forever.

4th. The next example of unbelief, we will produce, is the case of the careless and unthinking sinner. He is not a christian nor is he an infidel—in fact he is nothing.—With some propriety he might be called a civilized Pagan—a heathen in a land of gospel light. Perhaps he has never had a Bible in his house; or if he has, he does not read one sentence of it in a month. Upon the whole, he knows as little of its contents, as a Mahomedan or Indian who never saw the book. All his Sabbaths are spent in visiting, trading, worldly conversation, vain amusements and loud laughing. Perhaps he does not go to meeting once in a year; or if he does, he stays on the outside of the house, laughing talking and jesting, without attending to one sentence he hears. In short, the world is his god, and its cares and pleasures, his devotion. He lives as if there were neither death nor judgment, heaven nor hell. Though a glorious blood bought, free salvation is provided, and offered even to the worst of sinners, yet he never spends a thought about it—he treats it with as much contempt and inattention, as the dust beneath his feet. Though the truth of the Bible—the religion of Jesus—and the plan of redemption through Christ, is supported and established by the plainest testimony, and incontestible evidence, yet he thinks no more about the matter than the wild savage of the forest. He will tell you, that he seldom or never looks in the Bible—he knows nothing about what it contains—he cannot tell whether it is true or false—it may be true—probably some of it is: he never thought much about it. He cannot tell whether there be a hell or not—it may be, he never thought much about it. Whether there be a *hereafter*, or whether a future account must be given for the deeds done in the body, he cannot tell—it has not been, with him, a subject of

reflection. Such persons are truly unbelievers and the truth of God declares, "*He that believeth not shall be damned.*"

5th. There is another example of unbelief in the case of the lukewarm, Laodician professor, who has the form of godliness without the power; a name to live, while spiritually dead. He professes to believe the Bible, but in *practice* denies it. No doctrine in it, is more clearly pointed out, than that of regeneration, or an experimental, heart-felt change—a religion simply felt and sensibly known—a life of communion with God—feeling the love of God shed abroad in his heart. But the lukewarm professor denies it, rejects it, and hates it altogether as lies and falsehood. He terms it delusion—wild fire—enthusiasm. Every experimental sermon he hears founded in the light and evidence of God's word, condemns his hope, and tells him that hell will be his portion. But he shuns the light, and will not believe the testimony of the word and Spirit concerning his state—and at the risk of damnation clings to his false hope.

When the Lord pours out his Spirit in his settlement or neighborhood—when his relatives and acquaintances, and perhaps those of his own household, are deeply and solemnly convicted and brought to cry for mercy; and when some of them are brought to feel the pardoning love of God, though the truth and reality of the work, stand upon the clear light and evidence of the word—though it has all the features and lineaments of that work, which is said in the sacred scriptures to be so necessary to eternal life, that there can be no salvation without it; yet the formal professor resents and opposes it with the enmity of a devil. He regards it with the same animosity and opposes it with the same malignity that the Jews manifested in opposing and persecuting the Son of God—ascripting the power and agency of the Spirit to God to Beelzebub.

6th. Another example of unbelief is shewn in the case of the awakened sinner, who is patching up a fig-leaf garment of his own instead of the righteousness of Christ. Though he is brought in some degree, to believe that sin is an evil, dishonoring to God and damning to the soul—to believe that he is a wretched, guilty and condemned sinner—and that he must repent or be damned; yet, unbelief with gigantic strength, bars his heart against Christ, and holds him back from eternal life. The God of truth has declared, that his best duties, and his best righteousness are sinful and filthy rags; that his "*heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;*" that "*every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.*" But his unbelieving heart gives God the lie. He thinks himself much better than God says he is; at least he can do something good. Instead of coming, like a wretched, condemned

criminal, as he is, to the almighty, all-sufficient, and compassionate Jesus, he tries to work out a righteousness of his own. He flies to his reformation, duties, and his tears; to his resolutions, vows and promises; to his enlargements and melting frames; to any thing else, rather than come, as a starving dying beggar, and cast his soul into the outstretched arms of a bleeding Jesus. When the convincing light and power of the Spirit of God, sweeps away one refuge of lies, he flies to another; and from that to another, until his angel, hope, gives up the ghost—until he feels that he can live no longer without Christ.

When the poor awakened sinner is called, and invited, and told, to come to Christ just as he is—to tarry no longer, but fly for his life—that no recommending qualification is required—he recoils at this. He cannot come till he makes himself better. He must patch up a wedding garment to recommend him to Christ. His heart must be softened—he must have such and such feelings—he must be affected in a certain way, so that he can pray with fluency and vehemence. Again, when he feels himself on the very brink of a bottomless, burning hell—when all hope seems gone—when the word of God, and his ministers tell him that Christ is a gracious, compassionate and willing Saviour—that *he* is called in particular, and Christ is willing to save *him*,—unbelief gives God the lie. O, says the sinner, Christ is not willing: my sins are so great, there is no mercy for me. Christ is mighty indeed, and can save the vilest sinner, but he is unwilling to save me. My case is singular; it is a hopeless case; there is no hope for me; I surely cannot be saved. Thus, unbelief bolts the heart against the Lord Jesus, until the arm of the Omnipotent snatches it away. But, to give you a still more clear view of the nature and tendency of unbelief, we shall be yet more particular.

Suppose I were travelling, and a man of eminent character and high reputation should meet me, and tell me to proceed no farther, or I would be a dead man; that a party of murderers, were lying in ambuscade on both sides of the road; that death would be the inevitable consequence of attempting to pass; that many had tried to pass, but that every one, to a man, had been murdered; and suppose he were to entreat me, with tears, to stop and turn back;—would it not be unbelief with a witness, if I were to laugh at him, and call him a fool, and treat all his expressions of kindness and benevolence, with contempt and disdain, pursue my course, and rush upon inevitable destruction? Or, suppose myself and a number of other persons were in a house together, eating and drinking, apprehensive of no danger, and several gentlemen of unquestionable veracity were to come and call upon us, and entreat us to fly for our lives, for a body of armed men were in pursuit of us, and in a few moments

would be upon us, and put every man to death.—They would urge us to escape, without delay, else we would soon be cut in pieces. Suppose we were to laugh them to scorn, and tell them there was no danger, that we saw no dangerous enemy approaching, and had nothing to alarm us.—Again, they would inform us that our danger was the greater, since we were unconscious of it—that these terrible enemies would come upon us, like a thief in the night, at a moment when we least expected them.—They would redouble their entreaties, and with tears of compassion would beseech us to improve the present moment, and escape before it would forever be too late. And after all this, suppose we should treat them with contempt and ridicule—should tell them they were blockheads—get angry with them, and ask them to give themselves no concern about us;—that if we are in danger, it is none of their business; and so remain and risk the imminent danger. Certainly this would be unbelief to all intents and purposes. Well, such examples as these afford but a faint idea of the dreadful infatuation of sinners under the reigning power of unbelief.

The word of God declares, that "*the wages of sin is death;*" that "*the soul that sinneth, it shall die;*" that impenitent sinners shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb;—that the smoke of their torment shall ascend up forever and ever, and that they shall have no rest day nor night. Now, let me solemnly ask, Do sinners believe this? No. They declare, by their conduct, that God is a liar—when they can with pleasure and delight without fear or dread live in the love and practice of known sin. The command of God is, "*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*" Let reason and conscience speak. Do sinners believe this? Do they not give the Eternal God the lie, when they blaspheme his sacred name upon every trifling occasion; and repeatedly call upon him to damn their souls in hell?

God commands—“*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.*” And he tells us that on his holy day, we must not seek our own pleasure, speak our own words, or perform our own works. Do sinners believe this? Do they not declare that God lies, when they spend the Sabbath in laughing and talking, sleeping, conversing about worldly matters, in trifling and vain amusements?

God's word declares, “*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*”—“*God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.*”—“*Pray without ceasing.*”—“*In every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.*” It declares that God is a jealous God, and will not suffer sin,

nor sinners to pass unpunished. But sinners do not believe these declarations; for experience and observation prove that they every day and every hour give the Eternal God the lie, by living prayerless, and not worshipping him in public or private, and living as if there were neither God, nor death, nor a future state. In short, unbelief was the source of the first sin that ever was committed; for it declared, in opposition to what God had said, "*Thou shalt not surely die.*" And every sin, which the sons of men have since committed, either of thought, word or deed, have sprung from unbelief.

The language of the sinner's conduct, whenever he commits sin, is, I shall not surely die—God is not that God of truth which he declares himself to be—he will not punish—I shall not feel the vengeance of eternal fire for my sins. The tendency of unbelief is to harden the heart and sear the conscience. It puts death, judgment, and an awful eternity, quite out of view; it removes them, in the sinner's imagination, to an infinite distance. It represents the high and lofty one---the thrice holy God---as a sort of a foolish, easy, simple being, who will suffer his laws and government to be insulted and trampled under foot, without taking any notice of it. Or rather, it represents him as a filthy, depraved being, somewhat like the sinner, who sees no evil in sin, and will connive at the wickedness of his creatures. It represents sin as an innocent, harmless, pleasing thing; and tells the sinner that there is very little future reward or punishment. It opens ten thousand avenues to every species of sin, and leads men to commit evil with pleasure, with greediness and delight. It takes off all restraint from the conscience, all apprehension of danger, and gives a loose rein to every lust, every imagination, and sinful desire; and, finally, it fixes the soul for irrecoverable and everlasting destruction---it binds down upon the sinner the damning weight of the guilt of all his othersins—it shuts the last and only possible door of mercy against the sinner; and, what constitutes ten thousand hells in one, it adds the guilt of the slighted blood of an incarnate God.

II. Say something of that damnation which is the immediate consequence of unbelief.

"*He that believeth not shall be damned;*" In the very reason and fitness of things, there exists the same connexion, between unbelief and damnation, as exists between cause and effect.—Damnation follows unbelief, as its inseparable consequence. Damnation is derived from the Latin verb *damno*, to condemn. It includes the whole curse and condemnation of the injured law of God, in its fullest and largest extent, together with all the infinite, eternal and indescribable pains, to be inflicted as the penalty of its violation. But the damnation connected with unbelief, contains in it something still more, inconceivably,

and inexpressibly dreadful. It contains not only the curse and the penalty of the divine law in its largest extent, but also the more awful and tremendous penalties of the despised gospel. *“He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorcer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, mho hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? And says our Divine Lord, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Zidon, for Sodom and Gomorrah, that never heard the gospel, than it will be for Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida, where his mighty works were done—where mercy was so graciously offered, and yet despised and rejected. Damnation implies in it, an everlasting separation from God—from Christ—from heaven—and from all possible good. It implies an eternal banishment beyond the reach of mercy—and being driven beyond even the possibility of hope. It implies all the infinite and everlasting pains, tortures and fiery torments of hell.*

SERMON XXXI.

THE DOOM OF THE IMPENITENT.

“For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it.”—ISAIAH, XXX. 33.

THERE are two things necessary to constitute a good Ruler. The first is, that his laws should be calculated to promote the general good and happiness of his subjects.—The second, that the penalty of his laws be so executed as to support the honor and dignity of his government, and deter his subjects from disobedience.

In no Ruler, Prince or Potentate, are these properties so complete and perfect, as in the character of the Supreme Lord and Sovereign of the Universe. View the laws which he has given to regulate the conduct of all rational and intelligent beings: they are founded upon infinite holiness, rectitude and purity: they are an exact copy of his moral attributes. View the divine law, in its nature and tendency, as requiring spotless holiness and perfection; and at once it will appear, that strict obedience to this law and perfect conformity to it, is the very essence of all true happiness: a constitution indeed becoming of a God, in which all the glory of his attributes, honor and dignity of his government, and the general good, the happiness and best interests of all his creatures are inseparably connected.

Then, it is right and proper, in the very nature of things, that a law, so holy, just and good—so well calculated to preserve the order, and promote the general good and happiness of the universe, should have such penalties to it, as would have the most natural tendency to deter all his intelligent creatures from sin and disobedience. For, sin being in its own nature, an infinite evil, a contempt of the infinite majesty and glory of God, is a stroke at his existence and aims at nothing less than to destroy Omnipotence—to dethrone Jehovah—to destroy all order and harmony—to introduce ruin, confusion and anarchy into the

universe, and finally to plunge all intelligent creatures into endless misery and perdition.

Then it follows, that it is an act of boundless goodness and love in God, to have provided a hell for finally impenitent sinners—and threatened eternal torments as the reward of every violation of his law. For, thereby his intelligent creatures are deterred from sin—the rights of the divine government are supported, and the general good of the universe promoted. It is not from a barbarous, ferocious temper, or from any delight in the misery of their fellow creatures, that wise legislators, appoint prisons and bedlam, or ordain fines and corporal punishments to notorious offenders; but from a desire, to promote the good of the public at large—the order, peace and welfare of society. By this means, anarchy and confusion are prevented; and murderers, robbers, and distracted persons, are restrained from spreading misery and destruction through the country. So the eternal God, from a supreme regard to the glory of his attributes, and the honor and dignity of his law—from a genuine love of the happiness and general good of his creatures—has annexed the most dreadful penalties to his law, and threatens eternal wrath and damnation to every sin: for this very purpose—to be a loud warning to all rational worlds, and prevent them from the destructive evil of sin. He has, in his eternal wisdom, ordained and prepared a dismal hell for all ungodly and impenitent sinners. The text informs us, that "*Tophet is ordained of old*"---that "*he hath made it deep and large*"---that "*the pile thereof is fire and much wood*"---and "*the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it.*"

In the preceding verses of this chapter, the prophet in the most majestic language, describes the vengeance of God upon the enemies of his church; and particularly upon the king of Assyria, who at that time was one of the most powerful foes of God's peculiar people. "*For through the voice of the Lord*," says he, "*shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod. And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps.*"

By the "*voice of the Lord*," we are doubtless to understand, the exertions of his Almighty power in the destruction of the wicked. This will appear plain, if we look at the xxix. Psalm. There we are told, that "*The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty; the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.*" By the "*grounded staff*," which the Lord should lay upon the king of Assyria, we are to understand his vindictive justice in the infliction of deserved wrath upon impenitent sinners. It is also called a "*rod of iron*:" "*Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*" By

the sounding of “*tabrets and harps*,” which should attend this dreadful scene, we may understand the universal assent of saints and angels to the justice of the divine vengeance, giving as it were, their *Amen* to the damnation of the ungodly; for they are represented as singing loud alleluias, ascribing “*Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power*” to God upon the occasion of his pouring out the vials of his wrath, upon the wicked, and saying, *Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.*” And again, saying “*Hallelujah*,” whilst the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever. Then, he gives an emphatical description of the infernal world—the place designed from eternity, in the mind of the infinite God, where he should give the most tremendous displays of his power and justice—dreadfully expressive indeed of the punishment and misery of the finally impenitent. “*For Tophet is ordained of old; for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.*”

Tophet literally signifies a place near Jerusalem, in the valley of the son of Hinnom. Here it is taken figuratively for hell. Perhaps for several reasons.

1st. Because Tophet or the valley of the son of Hinnom was the sink of Jerusalem, the place to which all the filth of the city was carried. So hell is the sink of the universe where all the pollution and filth of the moral world will be finally collected together.

2nd. Because Tophet, in the valley of Hinnom, was the place where the most terrible wickedness was perpetrated---where the idolatrous Jews burned their children in sacrifice to Moloch---Where, as history informs us, they put their infants in the arms of a hollow brazen image of a man, while it was heated red hot; and thence they passed into the lower parts of his body. During this hellish scene, drums were beating and trumpets sounding, to deafen their ears to the cries of the unhappy little victims. This was a scene of wickedness, at the thought of which, even depraved nature shudders, since it supposes that its actors were destitute of that restraining grace common to the worst of sinners. Therefore it is a fit emblem of hell, where all the sinners of the universe shall be collected into one great company, ---where all gracious restraints upon their corruptions shall be forever taken off---and where every evil habit and sinful disposition will come to full perfection.

3rd. Tophet in the valley of Hinnom, was a place noted for the execution of the divine vengeance upon the impenitent Jews. In reference to which it is called by Jeremiah, “*the valley of slaughter*;” for there the carcasses were to be burned,

until there should be no place left in which to bury them. In this respect it is a fit emblem of hell, where the vials of Jehovah's pure unmixed wrath are eternally pouring out: the valley of slaughter indeed where numberless millions of Adam's race lie spiritually and eternally dead---where all the dead souls, that have never been raised to newness of life by the Spirit of Christ, lie buried out of sight at an eternal distance from God---and from all possibility of hope.

In remarking farther upon this subject, we will take each particular as it stands in the text.

I. "*Tophet is ordained of old;*" it was ordained, and planned in the eternal counsels of God from everlasting. When the phrase *of old*, is used in scripture, it often signifies from eternity or from everlasting. By the same phrase, the prophet Micah expresses the eternity of the Son of God: "*But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee, shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*"

Then Tophet was ordained from eternity by the infinitie wisdom of God, as the place most suitable for the mighty displays of God's wrath, and where he might make his power known, upon the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, as the place where his boundless wisdom, his mighty power, his spotless holiness, and his inflexible justice, might shine with transcendent glory and brightness in the complete damnation of devils and finally impenitent sinners.

From this particular, we would make the solemn reflection: If Tophet was ordained of old—if the torments of the infernal world were planned in the eternal counsels of God---if they are the product of his infinite wisdom---O, what must be the miseries, the pains and tortures of the devils and damned sinners!

All the productions of his wisdom and power, are in every respect, worthy of a God. When he designs to bring universal nature into existence, lo, what a glorious structure springs into being!----Worlds, and systems of worlds, all fitted to the conditions of the numberless variety of their inhabitants---all acting in exact conformity to the laws ordained by their great Creator---and all loudly proclaiming the glory of his attributes. When he designs the salvation of a lost world, what a ' ious plan is revealed! How worthy of a God---and how suitable to the situation of lost sinners! A living way is opened which strikes adoring angels with wonder and astonishment! Into it seraphim and cherubim with outstretched necks desire to look, to behold justice and mercy united in Christ---all the attributes of God glorified---the divine law magnified and made honorable---and guilty, lost sinners, redeemed, saved and restored to the fa-

vorable friendship of God. With great propriety does the heavenly poet declare, that---

God, in the person of his Son,
Hath all his mightiest works outdone.

When he designs to happify poor, believing ransomed sinners, what a salvation, what a heaven, and what an "*exceeding and eternal weight of glory*," does he bestow upon them!----a kingdom, "*an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away*"----joys such as "*eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man*." And when he designs, in his eternal counsels, the damnation of the finally impenitent and ungodly---when he designs to shew his wrath and make known his power upon the vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction---it will also be a work worthy of a God, and which will eternally display the surpassing glory of his perfections. His eternal truth, will shine with Godlike splendor in the accomplishment of all the threatenings, terrors, and penalties of his law, which were loudly proclaimed to a guilty world, during his long suffering patience towards the vessels of wrath, whilst fitting themselves for destruction. Here his spotless holiness and inexorable justice, shine with a dreadful, yet lovely splendor in the inconceivable pains and torments of devils and damned ghosts of Adam's apostate race. Here the boundless wisdom of God is employed to its utmost extent in inventing pains and torments for the damned; and his almighty power in inflicting them.

Tremble ye careless sinners.

II. "*For the king it is prepared.*" This refers particularly to Senacherib, king of Assyria—that proud blasphemous monarch who bade defiance to the living God. But it also includes all of his character and description. Then it includes every sinner, out of Christ Jesus. Senacherib was an inveterate enemy to God and his cause; so is every unconverted sinner. For the Apostle declares that "*the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*" They are "*Enemies*" to God "*by wicked works.*"—"according to the prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," who are "*fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.*"

The Assyrian king proudly and blasphemously, bade defiance to the living God: so, also, does every sinner out of Christ; for every sin which he commits is a hostile attempt at the very life

of God, and aims at nothing less than to destroy his being—to overthrow all harmony and order, and to involve the whole universe in misery and ruin. When he commits sin, his conduct loudly proclaims that his own will is more fit to be the rule of his actions, than the will of God. And so far as he complies with the temptations of Satan, he practically declares that the will of the Devil, is a surer guide to happiness, than the will of the eternal Jehovah. Whenever he resists the checks of conscience—quenches the motions of the Spirit—breaks his solemn resolutions to repent and seek religion— whenever he slighted an offer of mercy—and hears a gospel sermon with trifling indifference,—he virtually declares that the pleasures of sin, are more to be desired than the comforts of religion; that the consolations of the Divine Spirit and the ineffable joys of the heavenly state, are unworthy his notice; that Christ has died in vain; and, that his blood which is infinite, is too contemptible for his consideration. By every sin he wades through Christ's blood to obtain the gratification which it can afford; and, offers the most horrible despite to the Spirit of grace. The language of every false hope, and every refuge of lies, when he calms his conscience to rest short of sound conversion, speaks loudly that, his good works, his prayers, tears and partial reformations, are better calculated to justify and save his guilty soul, and more capable to satisfy the law and justice of an offended God, than the perfect merits and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. By establishing a righteousness of his own, and refusing to submit to the righteousness of God, he treats the plan of redemption with contempt. He practically declares that the adorable Trinity have been engaged from all eternity, in the meanest trifles, not worthy his attention; that the unspeakable gift of the Son of God is a thing of nought. How just and how reasonable, then, in the very nature of things, that careless and impenitent sinners should be damned! How just and reasonable, must the divine conduct appear to every rational and intelligent being, in preparing a hell for wicked and ungodly sinners! "*To-phet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared*"---for all the ungodly kings and nobles, as well as Christless slaves and beggars---for learned, scoffing desist, and infidels, as well as for the unpolished rabble---as well for carnal time serving ministers, as for ungodly hearers---as well for lukewarm formal hypocrites, as for the openly profane and ungodly sinner. Yea, it is fitted and prepared by the boundless wisdom of God, for every soul out of Christ Jesus---let his character or occupation be what it may, who lives and dies impenitent.

III. "*He has made it deep, and large,*" wide and expansive enough, to hold all the filth and pollution of the moral world--- deep and large enough to contain every impenitent soul of

Adam's race, from the creation to the end of the world, who lives and dies out of Christ Jesus. And must it not be deep and large, indeed, when it contains not only all the apostate angels, but, also, the greater part of the human race, in every age, since the creation of the world?

Look at the history of the church from the beginning, and it will appear, that it is indeed a few, that have escaped the burning regions of hell. View the first period---from the fall, to the flood, and you will find the church to be indeed small, consisting from age to age of the family of Seth; and at the time of the flood, in the habitable globe, it was confined to one family. Only eight persons profess to have the knowledge of the true God, and one of these a hypocrite---an accursed Ham. All the world besides, were vessels of wrath prepared for Tophet.

From the flood, to the calling of Abraham, the true church was confined to a few families in the line of Shem. From the calling of Abraham, to the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the church is limited to the line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; whilst all the rest of the world is left in a state of wrath.

From the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, till the gospel dispensation commenced, the knowledge of the true God is limited to the nation of the Jews; and, perhaps, but few of them, under that dark dispensation, had a saving knowledge of God, while the whole world besides were left under the power of the Devil.

View, also, the history of the church from the resurrection of Christ, to the present time. Although millions, through many nations, were converted by the preaching of the apostles and their successors, until after the reign of Constantine, yet, many millions still remained impenitent. Then view, the growing declension from a very short period after the death of Constantine, till the last reformation, and we will find the light of the gospel, like a glimmering lamp, almost gone out, confined to the suffering Waldenses, and a few persecuted witnessess; whilst almost all the world, from age to age, went down to the dismal regions of the damned.

Although Satan's kingdom received a heavy blow by the blessed reformation; and although this glorious light still prevails; it is confined to a small part, when compared to the rest of the world; and at present to only a few kingdoms, and but few in them have a knowledge of Christ savingly and experimentally.

The earth is divided into four continents---Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. All Asia, Africa, and all America, except the United States and a few European Colonies, are Pagans, Mahomedans, Hindoos, or the worshipers of Confucius. Then, the christian church is confined to Europe and a small part of America. And again it is only in a small part of Europe that

the true doctrines of the reformation are maintained, viz. In the British dominions, Holland, part of Germany, part of Switzerland, Sweden, and Denmark, and the United States of America. All the world besides, are in a state of total darkness and ignorance of God. Then, out of these countries, mentioned, set aside all the atheists, deists, universalists, and such as hold damnable heresies, contrary to the very plan of salvation---set aside all the openly profane, and those who have no outward profession---and it will appear that there are but a few, in all the kingdoms and states, that profess the pure doctrines of the gospel.

Then, out of the several denominations which profess the pure doctrines of salvation, set aside all the lukewarm professors, who have a form of Godliness, but are destitute of the power---all prayerless persons---all carnal worldlings---and all self deceived hypocrites, who are resting upon something beside a saving union to Christ;---and then will it not appear that there are but a few saved---only a remnant of the human race---perhaps scarcely one among ten thousand? while all the rest remain in a state of wrath and condemnation---all preparing as fuel for the flames of hell.

But the smallness of the number saved, will appear, still more plain, if we consider the late blessed revival, which we saw in this country---how few, in comparison with the whole of our congregations, that seemed to be awakened to a deep and affecting sense of their guilt and misery! And how few of those who were awakened, gave solid evidences of a sound conversion! Perhaps at the most charitable calculation, not one tenth. Select from our public assemblies, those persons who have felt the pangs of the new birth, and savingly closed with Christ, and alas their number is so small that they would scarcely be missed; while all the remainder, by far the greater part, are lying in a state of wrath just upon the breaking brink of damnation. O! how large, how deep and wide must that infernal gulf be, that contains the fallen angels, who lost their primitive happiness, and has received by far the greater part of the human race in every age, from the creation of the world!

How many thousands and tens of thousands, are going down every hour, and every moment! Perhaps at this very instant, some thousands of poor Christless sinners are giving their last expiring gasp! Perhaps at this very moment, thousands are just opening their eyes, in this horrible, burning hell! just commencing their fruitless groans, and beginning to feel the pangs and tortures, which will never end!

IV. "*The pile thereof is fire and much wood.*" Here the prophet, by the most striking and majestic figures, describes the inconceivable horrors, miseries, and torments which devils and

damned ghosts of Adam's race, experience in the infernal world. These pains and torments, as they are the effects of almighty power are as they inflicted by the Omnipotent arm of Jehovah, are above all human conception. Even the tongue of the brightest seraph could not find language to express them. As "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;*" so the eye hath not seen nor the ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the miseries, the pains, and the horrors, which the infinite God hath prepared for all Christless impenitent sinners. Here they are described by the figure of a pile of fire and much wood. By the wood or fuel, we are to understand the unhappy wretches who are the subjects of eternal torments—devils, and damned souls and bodies of Adam's apostate family—all the filth and refuse of the universe, which an infinitely holy and just God regards as unfit for any other place—all ranks and classes of ungodly, impenitent sinners—collected into one horrible company, bound up in bundles and piled together, for the vengeance of eternal fire. By the fire we are to understand all the miseries, pains and tortures, that an infinite God can inflict: or immortal beings can possibly endure throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. These are also represented in scripture under the metaphor of fire and brimstone, as nothing in the material world can give so shocking an idea of pain and misery.

Here we will attempt some description of the miseries of this unhappy world. And here the united wisdom and eloquence of men and angels, come infinitely short of the task. Nothing less than the infinite mind, of the eternal God can form an adequate idea of it.

1st. One ingredient of their misery, is the *horrible company* to which they are forever confined.

How painful and distressing would it be for any one of you, to be shut up, for one night, in a dark room, with no other company than the Devil in some hideous form! But here, poor damned sinners, are eternally shut up in the dark dungeon of hell, where not one ray of divine mercy ever enters—where the smallest gleam of hope never comes.—and that in the worst of company:—with no other companions than black horrible, devils, and all the ungodly wretches of the human race, who are deemed by eternal justice unfit for any other place.

2nd. Another ingredient of their misery is this—The image of the Devil which they brought into this world by virtue of the fall of Adam will then be complete. They will be as like the Devil, in their tempers and dispositions, as their nature can possibly admit. Then every possible restraint shall be taken from their corruptions; and their enmity against God, and every sin-

ful propensity, will be brought to full perfection. There they shall have the most perfect sense of their loss. This will be intolerable. The loss of God, who is the source of all good, and the only happyfying portion of immortal beings; the loss of Christ, the only friend of sinners, and the loss of his whole salvation which was purchased at no less expense, than the heart's blood and dying groans of a God;—the loss of heaven, with all its unspeakable joys and ineffable glories; the loss of an "*exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*" the loss of their own souls, which are worth more than ten thousand worlds; the loss of all the means of grace, calls and offers of mercy; and the loss of all possibility of hope.

3rd. Another ingredient of their misery, is the dreadful and racking accusations of conscience, which, like a never dying worm, gnaws upon their vitals. Conscience, which once they stifled and murdered, now awakes like a giant refreshed with wine, and roars with a voice more dreadful, than ten thousand thunders. Conscience, brings fresh to their remembrance the whole black catalogue of all their sins of thought, word and actions—all the calls, warnings and invitations of the Lord Jesus, which they have despised and rejected. Conscience presents eternally to their view, all the motions and impulses of the Divine Spirit, which they quenched—all the pungent convictions which they have murdered. Yea, conscience eternally holds up before their sight the blood of the Son of God, which they have so often slighted and trodden under foot; and this they feel indeed to be the very hell of hells—the very emphasis of damnation.

To this, we may add, the constant and uninterrupted communications of Jehovah's pure and unmixed burning wrath which preys upon the immortal part, in a manner more inconceivably dreadful, than that of a burning, fiery furnace upon a natural body.

This seems to be plainly held forth, in the last part of our text.—“*The pile thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it.*”

This supposes that the Almighty Jehovah exerts his perfections to the utmost, to make them completely and eternally miserable; that his boundless wisdom which planned the universe, and invented the laws by which all nature are governed, which devised and revealed the plan of redemption to a dying world, is now exerted to the utmost, in devising pains and racking torments; and his Omnipotence, is eternally displayed in executing them upon the damned. But what the wrath of a sin avenging God is, who can tell? Or what are the pains and tortures, which infinite wisdom can invent, and his almighty power inflict, no created mind can conceive. Nothing less than the eternal mind of God can comprehend them. Even a distant view of

them in the present world is of all things else, the most intolerable.

Hear the insufferable groans and hideous outcries of Spira even before he left the world. See Altamont worn to skin and bones blaspheming God and cursing himself, continually crying out, O torture, torture!—O torture, torture! Hear unhappy Newport crying, I had but a little pleasure in this world, and now I must have hell forevermore. O! that God would suffer me to lie forever at the back of a common fire on earth; but I must go to hell—I must go to the furnace of hell, for millions of millions of ages! But all this gives us not the most distant idea of what really are the miseries of the infernal world. Were all the misery, pains, diseases, and tortures, ever felt by the whole human race since the creation of the world collected into one, and laid upon one person, this would not do. Add to this again ten thousand times the horrors, pangs, and racking tortures that Spira felt; all this, collectively, would not amount to the pain and torments of one twinge of divine wrath in the infernal world. For all this is only the effect of created power: but the torments of hell are produced by the power of an infinite God.

But, in vain do we try to alarm poor sinners, by pointing out the horrors of hell, or the miseries of an unconverted state. Were one to rise from the dead and describe them, from his own wretched experience, it would have no abiding effect. Says Rutherford, if it were possible to set open to the sinner's view, the burning lake of hell—and were they for thirty years to see its fiery billows rolling—and to hear the yells and groans of the damned ghosts, roaring under the burning wrath of an angry God; yea, were Dives to come up from the furnace of hell and to shew to sinners the stripes and scars which he has received from the Devil's scorpions—were he to bring up the red hot coals of God's wrath, as large as mountains, yet all this would not persuade one sinner to repent.

SERMON XXXII.

THE SAVING SIGHT.

“We would see Jesus.” JOHN, xii. 21.

MAN ever delights to behold, to contemplate and admire, that object which possesses his highest esteem, which holds the ascendancy in his affections. The miser loves to look at his gold, to handle it, and count it—and that, because it is his portion and his happiness. The man of the world delights to see his beautiful farms, his flocks and herds, and large possessions; because his chief happiness is bound up in them. The drunkard loves to look upon the bottle and the intoxicating bowl.—The very sight of them warms his heart and elevates his mind; because in them is contained his chief pleasure and the greatest satisfaction which he enjoys in life. So, also, the real christian, the new born child of God, loves to see Jesus and behold his glory, and with joy, delight and wonder, to admire and adore his soul attracting beauty and loveliness; and for this reason—he is the centre of his love, his portion, his inheritance, and the soul and substance of his happiness. Christ, in his esteem, is the fairest among ten thousand and altogether lovely. He fills his heart and his affections—he is dearer to his soul than life itself, with all its pleasures and comforts; and his greatest happiness on earth, is to “see Jesus”—to have sweet communion and fellowship with him, and to feel his love shed abroad in his heart; yea, the very heaven after which his soul longs and pants, is to “see Jesus”—to see him forever and be like him.

The text contains a short compend of the christian’s exercise, and is expressive of the desires and longings of their souls. Jesus is the lovely object, that attracts their whole hearts—that engrosses their warmest affections; and, therefore when they see him and obtain a view of his glory, they enjoy the first fruits of heaven in their souls—they feel the dawning of immortal glory within them: their hard hearts are softened—their cold hearts are enflamed—their in-bred corruptions are weakened

—and all the graces of the Divine Spirit are quickened and strengthened. When they “see Jesus” they experience a bliss which all the empires, crowns and thrones, in the universe could not give. When they do not enjoy his presence—when the sight of his bright glories is withheld—they feel an empty void within, the world could never fill. Nothing but a view of Jesus can afford them happiness. When they are bewailing the hidings of his face and all is darkness on every side, ask them what will remove their complaints and satisfy their fainting burdened souls. At once they will tell you, that a view of Christ—a sight of Jesus is all they want. When their iniquities prevail, and, like Lazarus, they are full of loathsome sores, in a moral sense, then ask them what will ease their pains and heal their broken bones.—They will tell you one smile from Jesus. When they are struggling with the frowns, crosses and disappointments of the world—when the Providence of God seems to run in direct opposition to all his gracious promises, and all things seem to be against them—and their case looks so dark and hopeless that they know not what to make of it---then inquire of them what will kill their unbelief and silence their repinings and murmurs against God, with which they are tormented,---they will tell you, it is a view of Christ. One look from Jesus, says the afflicted soul would bow my heart in sweet submission to God; this would quicken my weak faith---give me a heavenly contentment---and cause me to rejoice in the sovereignty of God. Ask the believing soul, at what time he enjoyed the greatest comfort and satisfaction—he will tell you it was when he saw Jesus. Ask him when the world with all its pomp and glory appeared the smallest, in his esteem---when thrones and kingdoms seemed only to be children’s toys---he will tell you it was when he saw Jesus. Ask him when it was that he had the most humbling and self abasing views of sin---when it appeared most dishonorable to God and destructive to the soul---he will answer it was when he saw Jesus. Ask him when it was that his heart was almost ready to break with pity and compassion for ungodly sinners---when he groaned and travailed in birth for his unconverted friends and neighbors---he will answer it was when he saw Jesus.

Ask him why he prays in secret with groanings which cannot be uttered---he will tell you he would see Jesus. Ask him why he prays in his family---why he attends the house of God and listens to the preaching of the word as if for life and death: it is because he would see Jesus.

When he returns from the ordinances of God with the same complaints, which he carried with him,---with the same cold dead, and unaffected heart, bemoaning his case and sadly disappointed---inquire the cause of all his complaints, woes and sor-

rows----he will tell you he did not see Jesus. Ask of him why he spends his days in grief and sadness, like one banished from his father's house----why he complains of an absent God, a careless heart and a painful uneasiness, and yet makes no vigorous exertions for relief: it is because it has been so long since he saw Jesus. Indeed, the believer's great object, from the moment of his conversion till the hour of his death is, that he may see Jesus----that he may behold his glory and enjoy sweet sensible communion with him here below; and that he may see him eternally as he is, and forever enjoy him in the world of glory and blessedness above.

The words of the text were spoken at that memorable period, when our blessed Lord and Redeemer rode triumphantly into Jerusalem---when he went up to the passover, upon which occasion he bled and died upon the cross, thereby finishing the work which his Father gave him to do, in the completion of the work of redemption. Not long previous to this time, our Lord had performed that glorious miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. The fame of this miracle, and hosannas and divine honors which were paid him, upon his entering the city, caused great multitudes of the people to flock from all quarters to see him: many from curiosity, and some from a desire for instruction. Among these, were certain Greeks---either gentle Greeks proselyted to the Jewish religion, or else some of the dispersed Jews who came from some of the Grecian States to attend the feasts of the Passover. Some of these came to Philip of Bethsaida, and expressed to him their desire to see Jesus---"Sir, we would see Jesus." It is not agreed upon what principle they desired to see Christ, or have an interview with him. Some suppose it was only from curiosity; others that it was from a pious desire of hearing his doctrines and receiving some divine instruction from him. Be this as it may, the words speak the exercise and desires of every soul that is born of God.

Then, in the examination of this subject, we shall attend to the following important inquiries:---

I. Who are they that desire to see Jesus.

II. What is a view of Christ.

III. Where is He to be seen.

IV. What is to be seen in him.

V. What effect a view of Jesus produces on the soul.

VI. Why every genuine christian desires to see Jesus.

I. Who are they that desire to see Jesus? 1st. The awakened sinner who feels himself totally lost and undone; he who groans under the burden of unpardoned guilt with heart rending anguish and distress, who, like the woman with the bloody issue, that spent all her living upon other physicians, have tried to wear off their convictions, by the pursuits, the cares and anx-

ieties of the world; who have tried to pray or weep them away; or to ease his conscience in something short of a sound conversion; but all in vain: his pain and anguish increase—the wound in his heart grows corrupt and festers; and his case seems to grow worse and worse. His heart remains within as cold as hard and obdurate as a rock---and as immovable as a mountain. The more he prays and struggles against the corruptions of his heart, the more it seems to abound with filthy lusts, blasphemous thoughts, and vile imagination. He esteems his prayers, sin and rebellion; yet pray he must---he dare not omit it, as the pain of damnation and the curse of God pursue him close; and vengeance gathers thick with dreadful blackness, just ready to burst upon his guilty soul. He is now shut up to the only door of hope, viz. faith in Christ. He is commanded to believe, to fly to Christ, or perish. He has to exercise faith, but he can as soon raise the dead or create a world. And now he feels his utter helplessness; and, like a poor condemned wretch, he falls at the feet of mercy, with no other plea but that of *guilty*. Here he resolves to lie, and if he perish, to perish at Jesus' feet begging for mercy. Matters have now come to the worst, he feels that he must have Christ--- that he cannot live without him. How painfully and earnestly does the poor burdened sinner desire to "*see Jesus.*" Never did a captive slave in the Spanish mines long so anxiously for freedom; never did the condemned criminal, confined in the dungeon, under the horrors of approaching death, long so earnestly for a pardon; as the sinner does to see Jesus---to obtain one look of divine mercy.

2d. The backsliding believer who has sinned away his former comforts---who has pierced and grieved the loving Jesus, and provoked him to withhold his gracious visits---how anxiously does he desire to see Jesus. He feels an empty void in his soul which the world with all its pleasures cannot satisfy. None but Jesus can afford him comfort. He seeks him from ordinance to ordinance, and in anguish of soul he cries, *O* that I knew where I might find him---I would come even to his seat. All his former joys---his past experiences and comfortable seasons, do him no more good now, than the food which a man ate months ago. He must have a new discovery of Christ; and therefore, he must come as poor, helpless, and wretched as he did at first. He must see the exceeding sinfulness of his nature---that all he does is impure in the sight of a holy God.

3rd. The soul that has seen Jesus and tasted of his love, desires to see him and feels his love continually shed abroad in his heart.

Although a view of the glory of God in Christ affords the greatest possible happiness which man can know this side of

heaven, yet every view of the divine glory leaves a longing anxiety in the soul after him—after new and more glorious discoveries of his perfections. The more gold the miser possesses, the more does his thirst for gold increase. The beauties and glories which the soul discovers in Christ, increase the longing anxiety of the soul to see and enjoy him.

II. What is a view of Christ.

Now, since it is a view of Christ, and nothing else, which calms the troubled conscience, and quenches the sparks of divine wrath—since it is a view of him, that fills the soul with unspeakable joy and peace in believing, and begets a lively scriptural hope of heaven and immortal glory—it is a matter of infinite concern to each of us to know, what it is to “see Jesus.” Then, to speak negatively.—

1st. It is by no means a view of Christ, which the soul has, when the burden of pain and distress was removed in such a way, that the person can give no reasonable account of it. A view of Christ is a sensible thing; and he that enjoys it can give a rational and scriptural account of the matter.

2nd. It is by no means that joy, peace, and comfort, which proceed from extraordinary enlargements in prayer, or from uncommon commotions of the passions, or softening and melting of the affections; for although these things may attend a saving view of Christ, yet they are essentially different from it.

3rd. Nor is it the effect of any particular promise or passage of scripture brought into the mind. True, in conversion, the promises of scripture may be brought to mind, but then such divine light is cast upon them by the Holy Spirit, as discovers the glory of Christ. The Devil is capable of applying scripture and introducing its promises to the mind, for the purpose of deceiving.

4th. It is not a visible light or apparition, which is to be seen by the eye of the body, nor sound that can be heard by the ear: it is nothing which can be received by the external organs of sense; neither can it be communicated in dreams or visions. These, for the most part, are delusions of the Devil. Nor is it any ideal image of nature, drawn upon the imagination, that can be comprehended by the weak capacity of the creature; such as some tell us, they have seen, not with the bodily eye, but with the eye of imagination;—something in the form of a man bleeding and dying on a cross. They have seen his bloody robe—the wound in his side---and the blood running in streams. This is no view of Christ, but a deception of the Devil; for in a saving view of Christ, the object discovered is nothing which can be seen by the bodily eye, heard by the ear, or comprehended by the organs of sense; nor yet any ideal image formed in the imagination. The object is infinite and in-

comprehensible----only to be seen by the eye of the understanding when enlightened by the Spirit of God.

But, positively----a saving view of Christ is a sight of the glory of God in the face of Jesus; for he is the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person----It is to behold the attributes of God. This is evident from the instance of Moses who prayed to the Lord, saying, "*I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.*" This request is granted, and what does he see? The perfections of God. The Lord proclaims himself before him. "*The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.*" Then to "see Jesus," is to behold the holiness, justice, wisdom, power and mercy, truth and goodness of the Deity, manifested and gloriously displayed in the active and passive obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the view which calms the troubled conscience, melts the hard heart, and transforms the soul into the image of God----which communicates unspeakable joy and comfort to the soul and begets a well founded hope of heaven and immortal glory. This glorious object is not seen by the eye of the body, or of the imagination; but yet is plainly and conspicuously beheld by the understanding.

III. Where is Christ to be seen.

In answer to this, I would say, Christ is to be seen in his word----the scriptures of eternal truth. The Bible is the treasury in which this pearl of Great price is hid, and all that is wanting is spiritual eyes to see it in every page and in every sentence. It is very true, that no man can see Christ or behold his glory until that God, who at first commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into his heart by the enlightening influences of his Spirit, and gives him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus; yet the word of divine revelation, is the medium through which Christ is seen, and his amiable excellences discovered. This affords the children of God, the most rational and solid foundation for true comfort, and permanent hope: for then they have the witness both of the word and Spirit of the God of truth, to prove the reality of their spiritual exercises and experience. And so, by the mouth of two witnesses the whole is established. The word was indited by the Spirit, and by it, he attests the genuineness of the work of grace in the heart. Therefore every sight of Christ---and every view of his glory, accords with the description given in the word of God. Permit me also to observe, that a saving view of Christ, is no new revelation distinct from that contained in the scriptures, but simply a divine illumination of the mind, enabling it to understand the spiritual meaning of what is al-

ready revealed. This is manifest from the cause of the two disciples when overtaken by Jesus in the way to Emmaus. The Spirit explains the Scripture, and gives the soul to behold Jesus in his word and promises---to see him as exhibited in the gospel; and hence the Bible seems to be a new book to every soul when converted.---He is astonished at his former blindness and stupidity. Before, he had read the Bible, and thought he understood it; but still it was a sealed book; Christ, the pearl of great price, he could not discover: but now he can "*see Jesus*" throughout the whole word of God; and through this medium, as with a glass, he beholds the fertile fields of glory, and the rivers of the water of life which flow through the Paradise of God. Here by the light of the Spirit, he can read his title to the heavenly inheritance, and prove the reality of his union to Christ.

Some may ask---is he not to be seen in all the ordinances of his house? Yes; but even then it is by the light of the Spirit shining through the medium of divine revelation. Many a sweet interview has the soul had with Jesus in secret.---In the lonely wood---in the thicket---or at the foot of a tree, he meets with his disciples and shows them his pierced hands and feet, and permits them to look into his bleeding side. There he gives them sweet tokens of his love, he opens his ear to their complaints, and graciously suffers them to pour their woes and sorrows into his bosom. Sometimes he graciously vouchsafes to meet them in their families---and turns in to lodge with them. And O, how mean and contemptible do the pomp and glory of this world seem, when Christ is under their roof! Sometimes when they go to his house seeking him, with sorrowful looks and weeping eyes, their hope almost gone, and faith ready to fail, expecting to find themselves hypocrites and self deceivers: lo, to their sweet surprise he appears in the galleries of his grace---they behold him clothed in all his soul ravishing beauty, and smiling upon them, and saying, "*Peace be unto you.*" "*Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*" Sometimes he meets them at his table. Then he appears to their view, clad in the dyed garments of salvation---in his vesture dipped in blood.

Then he describes the thorns he wore,
And tells his bloody passion o'er.

He shows all the scarlet streams of divine blood flowing from all his open veins, until their hearts are broken with deep contrition and penitential sorrow for sin; and then their hearts love, adore and wonder; and are lost in the boundless ocean

of the love of God. At the same time, how does the enmity of their hearts rise against sin---they hate themselves and sink into the dust with shame and self-loathing,

IV. What is to be seen in Christ.

This is a question which all the angels in heaven, and all the redeemed saints of God, both in the church militant and the church triumphant, could not resolve, while eternity rolls its perpetual round; for all the infinite glories and perfections of the Deity are essentially in him.

Saith the Spirit, "*In him dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head bodily.*" "*Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.*" As God, he is the essence and sum total of all beauty, loveliness and excellency---the boundless ocean of perfection and the immeasurable fountain of Being, before whom all other beings, and ranks of beings, are but as the drop of the bucket, or the small dust of the balance, yea, nothing and less than nothing and vanity. As Immanuel, God manifested in the flesh, he possesses every divine perfection, and every human excellency. Here faith can gaze and admire, and drink from the shoreless, bottomless, boundless ocean of his sufficiency, all that guilty, ruined, lost sinners can need. In him condemned rebels may see the suitableness and entire sufficiency of the plan of redemption, devised by the eternal wisdom of God, and accomplished by the incarnation, the obedience, and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here you may behold the height and depth, the length and breadth, of the love of God in Christ Jesus, which passeth all knowledge; even that love which from all eternity moved the compassion of Jehovah to a lost world---which was manifested in the gift of his son---which pours from the bleeding heart of Jesus---and flows infinitely free to guilty sinners of Adam's race. In him you will see the sweet harmony and union of the divine attributes. Here you may behold and understand that glorious mystery which strikes the angelic minds with wonder; God inflexibly just and yet the justifier of the ungodly sinner: sin punished, but the sinner saved. The spotless holiness, and inexorable justice of God is displayed in the punishment of sin, and infinite goodness and mercy manifested in its pardon. Here you may behold the spotless robe of Christ's law fulfilling righteousness, wrought by him for naked sinners--- for condemned criminals, who stand obnoxious to the curses of the divine law: exposed to the fury of Almighty vengeance. This spotless robe is suited by eternal wisdom to every case and condition---it fits precisely every sinner, of every age, sex, size and description. It has stood the inspection of a God---inflexible justice has tested its

every part; and the most abominable cursed, sinner, if clothed with it, stands justified before God---is acknowledged a child and heir of God, and joint heir with Christ. All are invited to come and live. The Almighty Creator becomes a suppliant to the creatures: he beseeches and entreats them to come and receive a kingdom---an exceeding great, and eternal weight of glory as a free gift, without money and without price. In a word, come and see in Christ---what all the wisdom and eloquence of men and angels, shall never be able to tell.---Come and see Jesus; take one faith's view of him, and you will acknowledge that he is fairer than the sons of men, that he is infinitely deserving of your highest love.

V. What are the effects of a view of Christ.

1st. A view of Christ, transforms the soul: *“But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”* By a spiritual view of Christ the soul sees God as he is---discovers the superlative beauty and loveliness of the divine attributes; and is thereby sweetly constrained and powerfully drawn, to choose and delight in God, for what he is of himself. Hence a sight of Jesus is the first spring of all true love to God.

A view of Christ impresses upon the soul the lively image of all the perfections of the Deity, and begets within the same temper and mind that was in Jesus; and, indeed, the soul may be said to be a partaker of the divine nature.

2nd. It humbles and abases the soul. This is plain from the exclamation of Job.---*“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”*---*“They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born.”* The same light which discovers the soul attracting glories of the Lord, and manifests his superlative beauty and the loveliness of his attributes, also discovers to the believing soul its own vileness and utter unworthiness, and humbles it under a deep sense of shame and abhorrence of itself. A faith's view of Jesus is the cause of genuine gospel repentance. Before, the heart may have been tortured with the very foretastes of hell; but it was not broken and humbled until now. For the divine light which enabled it to behold the glorious holiness and purity of the nature of God, also discovers sin in all its hellish malignity and irreconcileable enmity to God.

This, sinners, is a paradox to you, and to all men in their unrenewed state. What! a soul receiving the glories of God in Christ, filled with unspeakable joy and comfort, and yet

mourning and weeping with heartrending sorrow---with as keen anguish and piercing groans, as those of a father for an only child!

3rd. A view of Christ so fixes the affections, and ravishes all the powers of the soul, that it immediately becomes willing to leave all for Christ. Let the sinner once "see Jesus," and that moment he will part with all things for him: he will sell all for Jesus, the pearl of great price. All the devils in hell, or men upon earth---all the sweets of sin, the pleasures and profits of the world---cannot hold him from Jesus. The language of his heart is like that of Paul---"Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Zaccheus climbed the tree to see Jesus, but no sooner did he become spiritually acquainted with him, than he forsook all for Christ---all his unjust gains and worldly advantages. The first view of Christ, determines James and John to leave their father, to desert their ships, their nets, and their worldly employment, and all, to become his humble and despised followers.

4th. Every view of Christ leaves an anxious longing and thirst for him. This will appear evident from the example of Moses, who, although he lived in the nearest intimacy with his God---though Jehovah conversed with him face to face, as a man converses with his friend: all this does not satisfy him. He prays for closer communion and brighter discoveries. Lord "I beseech thee to show me thy glory." This is the case of the spouse, when she is in his banqueting house under the banner of his love, she desires closer fellowship with him. "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love." And this is the experience of every christian. In a word, a view of Christ breaks the hard heart---warms the frozen heart---and gives life to the dead soul;---heals all diseases of the sin sick soul---subdues the power of sin---quickens the new nature---and renders obedience easy. It fills the soul with joy and comfort---gives it a taste of heaven upon earth---and qualifies it for immortal glory.

VI. Why every genuine Christian desires to see Jesus.

The true christian desires to see Jesus because---1st. A saving view of him removes the sense of divine wrath, gives peace to the troubled conscience, and heals all the diseases and spiritual maladies of the soul. Every christian feels himself a guilty, needy, helpless and polluted creature; therefore, he is always sensible of his dying need of Christ; and lies daily at his feet, as a poor beggar, crying like the distressed leper---"Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;" or like the poor woman---"If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole;" or like Peter when sinking in the waves---"Lord save me!" None but Jesus

can help---one look from him would make me whole.

2nd. Because a view of Christ strengthens and quickens the graces of the Spirit, and enables him to grow from strength to strength in the heavenly work. If one view of the glory of God in Christ communicates life to the dead soul, and transforms it into the divine image, the more of such views they have, the more they will love and enjoy God.

3rd. Because a sight of Jesus is a foretaste of heaven, of the immortal glory of the heavenly state, and of its enjoyments; gives him upon earth joy unspeakable and full of glory; and bright hopes of joy above; such as "*eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man:*" and gives a blessed assurance of dwelling forever in the presence of the Lord---there to feast upon heavenly food, and drink of the water of life, springing from the foot of the throne of God and the Lamb.

SERMON XXXIII.

THE MEETING OF CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES.

“Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold he goeth before you into Galilee, there you shall see him; lo I have told you.” MATTHEW, xxviii. 7.

“Good tidings of great joy,” have been brought to our wretched and ungrateful world; and often have lost sinners been told of Christ Jesus the Saviour of the world. When he first appeared on the earth and was born in Bethlehem of Judea, the armies of heaven flew swift to bear the joyful tidings. Borne on wings of love, they come singing the heavenly song---“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will towards men.” To the shepherd an angel tells: “Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

When he hung upon the cross by four bleeding wounds, all streaming with blood, pierced through the heart by the soldier’s spear, and pierced through both soul and body by the sword of divine justice,—yet, although the scene was so bloody and so dreadful, that all nature was convulsed---the earth quaked---the mountains shook---the rocks rent---and the graves gave up the dead---the heavens were clothed in sackcloth---and the sun wrapped himself in darkness,—yet, says McLaurin, this day was the noon tide of everlasting love---the meridian splendor of eternal mercy.---Every wound and every streaming vein spoke better things than the blood of Abel—proclaimed glad news to the chief of sinners—pardon, peace and reconciliation to God. Yes, every drop of blood flowing from his streaming wounds and breaking heart, proclaimed mercy and free salvation to the worst of men and women.

But when he rises from the dead, another bundle of good news is opened, which spreads joy throughout the hearts of his followers.

On the first day of the weeek, very early in the morning, Mary Magdalene with others of the disciples, with painful anxiety visited the sepulchre. And we may observe, that the soul that meets with Christ, never finds him by seeking in a dull and languid manner. "*The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*" The soul who would meet Jesus, like the spouse in the song of Solomon, seeks him from ordinance to ordinance—through the streets and lanes of the city. Like the Canaanitish woman, he takes no denial, but turns every repulse into an argument as did the importunate widow in the parable of the unjust judge. He prays and never faints—he is continually pleading and crying to God for mercy. His language is that of old Jacob; "*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*" And therefore he is often up early in the morning, and even before day like Mary Magdalene. This good woman came to the sepulchre while it was yet dark with the other Mary, sorrowful and weeping, seeking Jesus. They are met by the angel who communicates to them the joyful news.—"*He is risen:*" and commands them to "*Go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall you see him:*" the women ran with joy to communicate the happy news to the disciples but before they had reached them, they are met by Jesus himself, saying "*All hail!*" When the two disciples are walking to Emmaus, weeping and bewailing the loss of their master, Jesus draws nigh and travels with them—opens their minds to understand the scriptures—and makes himself known to them in the breaking of bread; and tells them to return to Jerusalem to the other disciples. And while they are telling them of their meeting with Jesus, their Lord himself appears in the midst of them, saying, "*Peace be unto you:*" just so in the present day, when a believing sinner finds the Lord Jesus and tastes his love, he must straightway run and tell his christian friends and neighbors; and it not unfrequently happens, when relating his sweet views of Jesus, that he himself appears in their midst and blesses their souls with feasts of heavenly love.

It may be well for us to notice the circumstances of the resurrection mentioned in the context.—"*And, behold there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.*" This same messenger said unto the women; "*Fear not ye; for I know that you seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*" Then, in the words of the text, he tells them—"*Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead;*

and, behold, he goeth before you in Galilee; there shall you see him; lo, I have told you."

It has been the practice of the blessed Jesus ever since his resurrection, to make similar appointments for his mourning disciples to meet him, to see his glory, and feel his love shed abroad in their hearts. The ordinances of his house are so many places where the children of God, like Moses, obtain a sight of their divine Lord. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in which his death is shown forth, and he is exhibited crucified before our eyes, is one of his most important appointments. There his spiritual children are permitted to come into his presence, to see his face and enjoy sweet tokens of his love. And it is to this precious ordinance that we shall endeavor to accommodate the subject. Then, I tell you, as the angel did the disciples of old, by the authority of your glorious Lord—behold he is risen and goeth before you next Sabbath—to Race creek—there shall ye see him.

"He is risen from the dead." By this he proves to all worlds, that he has fulfilled the law of God, satisfied divine justice, and wrought a perfect, all-sufficient righteousness, by which God can be just and the justifier of the repenting and believing sinner. His resurrection stands an unquestionable proof, that his people's redemption is complete—that their price has been paid to the uttermost farthing.

"Behold he goeth before you." He has appointed the plan of meeting, and he will attend; and he invites all his dear children—those who have entered the strait gate of conversion, and beheld his glory, to meet him at his table; yea, he enforces his invitation with his dying command,—*"This do in remembrance of me."* And for your encouragement, he tells you, *"there you shall see him"*—not with your bodily eyes—for he has ascended far above the visible heavens, where he is exalted to the right hand of the Father—where he is now preparing a place for you in his Father's house—where he will soon receive you to himself, that where he is, you may be also, and behold his glory. As mediator he stands before the throne of God, with your names graven on both his hands; and as intercessor, he pleads your case before the Omnipotent. You shall see him by faith in his word and promises—you shall see him in all his glorious excellency and preciousness.

In treating farther upon this subject, we shall;

- I. Speak of the meeting between Christ and his followers.
- II. Say something of the qualification necessary to this meeting with Christ.

I. Speak of the meeting between Christ and his followers.

And we shall first notice what is presupposed in the idea of Christ and his people meeting. 1st. It is implied that he has

fulfilled the law, and satisfied all the demands of divine justice in their room and stead; for by nature they were children of wrath even as others, under the curse and the condemning sentence of God's righteous law. 2nd. That his all-powerful arm has rescued them from the jaws of the roaring lion of hell; for by nature they were willing slaves of the Devil----led captive at his will, and subject to his power. 3rd. That he has subdued them to himself by the agency of his Spirit; that he has translated them from death to life----from darkness to light, and from the bondage of sin and Satan, to the glorious liberty of the sons of God; that he has changed their infernal tempers and dispositions to meekness and heavenly love: for by nature they were enemies to God by wicked works----prone to evil as the sparks to fly upward----every imagination of their thoughts was evil, "*only evil continually.*" 4th. That they have beheld the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus; that their hearts and affections have been enraptured and enamoured of the beauties of Immanuel; that they have parted with all for him; that he is their righteousness, the strength of their hopes, and their all.

The next question is----When Jesus meets with his people at his table, what appearance will he make? What will they discover in him.

1st. They shall see him as did the penitent thief on the cross; they shall see him as the penitent Col. Gardiner, and thousands of repenting and believing sinners have seen him; they shall behold him exhibited hanging on the cross, all drenched in blood and tears; while the crimson streams of blood divine flow from the wounds inflicted by the scourges, nails, thorns and spear.---You will behold him in the garden, sweating---"*great drops of blood falling down to the ground;*" ye will see him at Pilate's bar, insulted and scourged: and, methinks you will hear those groans which awaked the dead----the groans of an incarnate God, which shocked the universe!----Methinks you will see that face, brighter than the light of ten thousand suns, spat upon, black and mangled, swelled with strokes and red with gore, and expressive of love and indescribable anguish: you will hear him addressing you in such language as this, O sinners! see what I suffer for you----at how dear a price I purchase for you pardon, salvation and eternal life! Behold how much I love you. Now all I ask in return, is that you will forsake your murdering sins, and go with me to my Father's house; and there possess an exceeding great, "*and eternal weight of glory,*" I ask it with my last and dying breath----by my wounds and expiring agonies. Will not this break the proudest heart? Will not every pardoned rebel, who sits at the foot of the cross,

and under the droppings of redeeming love, be constrained to cry in the language of the poet—

Yonder—amazing sight! I see
 The Incarnate Son of God
 Expiring on the accursed tree,
 And weltering in his blood.
 Behold! a purple torrent run
 Down from his hands and head
 The crimson tide puts out the sun—
 His groans awake the dead!
 The trembling earth, the darkened sky,
 Proclaim the truth aloud;
 And with the amazed Centurion cry,
 This is the Son of God.
 So great so vast a sacrifice
 May well my hopes revive:
 If God's own Son thus bleeds and dies,
 The sinner sure may live.

2nd. When you meet with Jesus, you shall see many crowns upon his head; you shall see him *riding upon the white horse of the everlasting gospel, clothed, with a vesture dipped in blood, and a name written upon his vesture and on his thigh*—KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.—You shall see him with millions of crowns—one for every pardoned and believing rebel: and every genuine conversion adds one to their number. And shall not Christ gain a new crown in Henderson county, at Race creek, on the fourth Sabbath in July, 1810? That would make it indeed a sweet and glorious day to the Lord Jesus Christ: it would be a day of gladness to his heart; for then like a travailing woman who forgets her pain and anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world, the compassionate Jesus would forget Gethsemane—his groans and bloody sweat—and the scene of dreadful torture and blood through which he passed on his way to Calvary; for then he would see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

It would be a joyful day to the people of God upon earth, and to the ministers of the gospel, who long for the conversion of poor guilty sinners, as the hireling for the evening shade. Yes, and it would be a joyful day in heaven: the waiting angels would ascend to Paradise with the glad tidings, and the seraphic and cherubic millions, and the spirits of just men made perfect, would tune their harps anew and sing the new song in strains of highest melody.

3rd, You shall then by the eye of faith, see him in his two natures, invested with all his mediatorial offices, and in all the relations which he sustains to you as a Saviour. You shall see

him clad with all the glories of the Godhead, with all the attributes and perfections of the Deity, possessed of all the graces of the divine Spirit, and of every amiable excellency of which human nature is capable. You shall see him as your Prophet, Priest and King—your Father, your Redeemer, your Shepherd, and your guide—your strong hold, your hiding place and sure defence—your righteousness, your hope, your joy—your peace, your heaven, and your ALL.

At this appointed meeting, if you could obtain such a view of his white and ruddy fair, and lovely face, as Moses had from the cleft rock; or as the beloved John had when he leaned upon his breast at the first communion table; as the disciples, going to Emmaus, had when he was made known to them in the breaking of bread; as the disciples had when he came among them and shewed them his hands and his side;—you will declare him to be the *chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely*: that, when compared with the brightness of his glory, the sun is but darkness, and angels and archangels, cherub and seraph, become small and insignificant, when compared with his infinite glory and surpassing beauty.

Again. When an amiable and respectable personage appoints a time and place for his friends to meet him, with free and open countenance, expressions of his love for them, he converses with them upon interesting and important subjects; so, when Christ meets with his dear, blood-bought children, they have sweet converse—sweet fellowship, and communion with him. While sitting at his table, and leaning upon his bosom, he gives them a mournful, joyful humbling, an exalting—a heart breaking, and heart gladdening narrative, of his bloody sufferings—his exquisite torments in the garden— and the ten thousand hells he endured in one, on mount Calvary;—and points to these as the springs of all their heavenly joy, and hopes of eternal blessedness.

“For you, the children of my love—
 It was for you, I died:
 Behold my hands, behold my feet,
 And look into my side!
 These are the wounds for you I bore,
 The tokens of my pains,—
 When I came down to free your souls
 From misery and chains.—
 Justice unsheathed its fiery sword,
 And plunged it in my heart;
 Infinite pangs for you I bore,
 And most tormenting smart.
 When hell, and all its spiteful powers,
 Stood dreadful in my way,

To rescue those dear lives of yours,
 I gave my own away.
 But when I bled, and groaned, and died,
 I ruined Satan's throne:
 High on my cross I hung, and spied
 The monster tumbling down.
 Now you must triumph at my feast,
 And taste my flesh and blood,
 And live eternal ages blest,
 For 'tis immortal food.

Again, he relates the glorious victories of his death, the triumphs of his cross; how he crushed the power of hell, and bruised the serpent's head: rescued the captives from the hands of the mighty, and, by the blood of his everlasting covenant, snatched the prisoners from the deep pit in which there is no water. This narrative fills their souls with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

But when I hear my Saviour, God,
 Count o'er the sins, a heavy load,
 He bore upon the tree,
 Inward I blush with secret shame,
 And weep, and love, and bless that name,
 That knew not grief, nor guilt, his own—
But bore it all for me.
 Next he describes the thorns he wore,
 And talks his bloody passion o'er,
 Till I am drown'd in tears.
 Yet, with a sympathetic smart,
 There's a strange joy beats round my heart—
 The cursed tree has blessings in't
 My sweetest balm it bears.
 I hear the glorious sufferer tell
 How on his cross he vanquished hell,
 And all the powers beneath,
 Transported, and inspired, my tongue
 Attempts his triumphs in a song,
 How has the serpent lost his sting,
 And where's thy victory, death?
 But when he shows his hands and heart,
 With these dear prints of dying smart,
 He sets my soul on fire.
 Not the beloved John could rest,
 With more delight upon that breast;
 Nor Thomas pry into his wounds,
 With more intense desire.
 Kindly he opens to me his ear,
 And bids me pour my sorrows there,
 And tell him all my pains.

When Christ and his children meet, he shows them the stability of the covenant of grace; he shows them the rich blessings, hidden in the promises of the God of truth; he shows them their titles to an inheritance in the heavenly Jerusalem; he tells them that he is preparing a place for them in the house of his Father; and that soon he will send a messenger to bring them home to himself. And we will add, that always when Christ and his children meet, he addresses them with the love and tenderness of a father. When he speaks to them, it is to impart that peace which passeth all understanding. When he addresses Mary Magdalene, he says, "*Woman why weepest thou?* This is an expression of kindness. But farther he says—"Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God." And when he converses with the two disciples walking to Emmaus; and opens to them the scriptures—he makes their hearts burn within them. When he comes to his disciples, while their doors were shut, his salutation is, "*Peace be unto you.*" And on another occasion he asks them, "*Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*" And says John in the Isle of Patmos, "*I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice was as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death.*"

Again, when an affectionate father invites his children to meet him and have an interview with him, he makes a rich entertainment for them. He feasts them on the dainties of his house; so when Christ appoints to meet the children of his love, the blood bought purchase of his soul, at his house and at his table; he provides for them a sumptuous feast, the richest dainties of the heavenly Paradise; he feeds them on provisions, more costly and delicious than that of angels and archangels; for—

"Never did angels taste above
Redeeming grace and dying love,"

He spreads his table with the "bread of life," which comes down from heaven—the hidden manna, the fruit of the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God—with the milk and honey of the land of promise. He feeds them on the sweet views of the divine glory and loveliness of Jesus Christ—the witness of a sealed pardon—"the peace of God which passeth all understanding---the consolations of the Holy Ghost---"Joy unspeakable and full of glory"---a sense of Jehovah's love shed abroad in the heart---bright hopes of eternal life and immortal glory. Is not this a feast of fat things? a feast of wine on the lees well refined?

When a loving father collects his children at his house on a particular occasion, he frequently bestows on them rich gifts, and presents, as tokens of his love and endearing attachments. This is always the case when Christ and true believers meet together. He bestows upon them the richest gifts which the full store house of heaven can furnish: the comforting influences of the Holy Spirit---the assurances of his love---faith in lively exercise ---victory over sins particularly dangerous---the spirit of prayer---near access to God, and sometimes answers to prayer, in the conversion and salvation of near friends and dear relations and in the gracious outpouring of his Spirit upon the church.

When Christ distributes these rich gifts, he gives like a God---often bestowing favors upon his enemies. I remember to have heard of a British king who was also Elector of Hanover, and having visited his German dominions, on a certain day showed himself to the gazing populace; and caused large sums of money to be scattered through the multitude, for the benefit of the poor and indigent. If this be a fact, it resembles the conduct of Christ; for when feasting his children at his table, on the blessings of the heavenly Jerusalem, he often bestows pardon upon poor sinners. He often scatters abroad the treasures of grace divine, among the unhappy souls, who are starving and perishing in the highways and hedges, that lead to hell.

Now, let us notice some of the properties of this meeting, which we expect shortly to take place between Christ and his humble followers. 1st. It will be grand and majestic, true it may appear to the blind, unconverted, mean and contemptible.---To them it will appear as did Christ to the Jews, without form or comeliness, or beauty. But the value and preciousness of a thing is not the less because fools, who are ignorant, should despise it. But it will be grand and majestic; for it is a meeting with the first character in the universe.---The whole adorable Trinity shall meet true believers on that day. The Eternal Father meets them in Christ; for he is the medium through which pardon is communicated to penitent and believing souls. God, the Holy Ghost, meets them too; for he is there with all

his comforting and sanctifying influences. It will be a meeting of all the attributes of God. These will centre, unite and harmonize in Christ, and rejoice in the salvation of pardoned justified rebels. In Christ mercy and truth, righteousness and peace embrace each other. In this meeting the praying soul meets a prayer hearing God, and witnesses the accomplishment of his promises.

2nd. It will be a joyful meeting. The joy felt at the meeting of friends, is always proportioned to the love which mutually subsists between them. Then, will it not be a joyful time, when the children of God meet their Lord at his table; for every genuine christian loves Jesus more than father and mother, brother and sister—more than all things else in heaven and earth. And the love which Christ feels for them, cannot be told by tongue of men or angels. He calls them the *apple of his eye*. The apple of the eye is the pupil, which is the tenderest and most valuable part of the organ, since through it light is received into the eye, and without it we could discern no object. You can form some idea of the strength of that attachment which is felt by a mother for the infant of her womb; but this bears no comparison to that which Jesus bears to the meanest of his followers. *“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yea will I not forget thee.”* In positive terms, he tells you how much he loves the *“travail of his soul”*—his humble followers; but it passes the comprehension of Gabriel.—*“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.”* Now, the united wisdom and eloquence of all the angels in heaven, and all the men upon earth, are inadequate to describe the extent of the love of the Father for the Son, yet, even so much, does Christ love his worthless and unworthy children. Then, will it not be a joyful meeting when the Lord Jesus Christ meets his children at his table?

3rd. It will be a heavenly meeting. It will bear some faint resemblance to that glorious and happy meeting which will shortly take place between Christ and his followers, in the Paradise of God—in the heavenly city of the New Jerusalem. Christ is there, and his presence constitutes heaven. The whole Trinity will be there; and I have no doubt multitudes of the inhabitants of heaven will be there. The holy angels have ever interested themselves in the redemption of lost sinners.—When the Son of God was to be incarnate; the angel Gabriel informs his virgin mother; an angel tells Joseph that his name shall be called Jesus, *“for he shall save his people from their sins;”* when born in Bethlehem, a host of angels descend to proclaim the blessed news to a lost world; when tempted in the wilderness, angels minister unto him; when agonizing in the garden, an angel comes to his relief; at his resurrection, an angel rolls away

the stone from the door of the sepulchre; the angel tells the weeping woman, that he is risen; and an angel notifies the disciples to meet him in Galilee. Our Lord tells us that there is *joy in heaven, among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.* The apostle says, they are "*ministering spirits. sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.*" And when our Lord's table is spread in the wilderness, and he holds communion with his saints, I think it is rational and scriptural to suppose, that the angels are hovering over the table and the assembly, rejoicing with Christ over the dear bought purchase of his blood, and waiting to bear joyful tidings to the heavenly mansions. And while they are sitting at the table, and communing with their Lord, it is more than probable, that some of their christian friends and brethren, who once sat with them at the same table, and under the same sermons—with whom they spent many happy days and nights before, but now have left the world and gone home to the church triumphant above;—I say it is more than probable, that some of these will be mingling with the angelic band around the "*heirs of salvation.*"

When we take into view these considerations, will it not be a heavenly meeting which Christ and his followers will have at the approaching solemnity. The inhabitants of heaven will be *there*; something of the spirit and temper of heaven will be *there*; and some of Christ's children, by faith, will have sweet views of the glory and blessedness of the heavenly country.

4th. On the part of God's people, it will be a *soul humbling* meeting. There is nothing which so effectually humbles the heart of man, as an interview with Christ. The moment he sees the beauties of Immanuel—feels his love, and tastes the joys of pardoned sin—his heart breaks and melts in streams of penitent sorrow for sin. He loathes and hates himself, and sinks into nothing before the eternal ALL. He is filled with wonder, that the goodness and compassion of the infinite and incomprehensible God, the source of all excellence, and the essence of all perfection, who humbles himself to see the things that are done in heaven, should even have been extended to such a filthy worm of the dust, less than nothing, and vanity. He looks upon himself as the greatest wonder of redeeming mercy. The language of his heart is—

Why did he thousands pass
And fix his love on me?
The deep and searchless reason is,
Jehovah's love is free.

Thus, Isaiah, when he beheld the Lord and saw his glory—when he saw him high and lifted up—his train filling the temple, and the six winged cherubims crying one to another saying, "*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of*

his glory." He abhors himself before God and cries, "*Wo is me! because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts.*" In like manner, when Job is admitted into the Divine presence and sees his glory, he exclaims, "*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes.*"

But how does the *prospect* of such a meeting affect the minds of the genuine followers of Jesus? What are their views and exercises, under the apprehension of so near an approach to their beloved Lord? That you may have some idea of their feelings and clearly understand the subject, I will introduce a plain and common simile. Suppose a woman, whose husband to whom she was devotedly attached, and regarded as the dearest half of herself, was in a foreign land transacting business in which the welfare of both during life was intimately concerned; and suppose he were to despatch a servant with a letter informing her that he was returning home, and requesting her to meet him on a certain day at such a place—for there she should see him;—Would not her heart leap with joy? Would she not read his letter again and again with unspeakable delight and anxiety? Would not every hour seem a day, and every day a year, until the time appointed came? When she would go to meet him, would she not dress herself in her richest apparel, that she might make a graceful appearance before him? And when she saw him, would she not leap into his arms, with every expression of fond affection? Would she not have a thousand things to tell him? With a mournful pleasure, she would relate every pain, every distress, and complaint; and make known to him every want; for she knows that such is the tenderness of his heart, that he will sympathise with her in distress; and such his kindness and goodness that he will supply every want.

This affords some faint resemblance to the paining anxiety and incessant breathings of the soul, which longs to meet with Jesus. In just such a situation the Psalmist says, "*As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.*" *My flesh and heart crieth out for the courts of the Lord; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and parched land, where no water is, that I may see thy power and thy glory as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.*"

II. Speak of the qualifications necessary to this meeting with Christ.

When a kind father or loving friend invites his children or particular friends, to partake with him a sumptuous entertainment at his house, it is necessary that they should come dressed in apparel suited to the occasion; so all Christ's children who would meet him at his table, must be clad in the "*wedding gar-*

ment" of Christ's law fulfilling righteousness, received by faith and imparted to the soul for justification.

This is the first ground and radical qualification necessary to entitle the sons and daughters of Adam to a right to come to Christ's table. The soul who is clothed in this garment is a welcome guest; but he who comes without it, eats and drinks damnation to himself. In the parable of the marriage supper, (Matt. 22) we are told that the king came and viewed the guests, and found there a man who had not on a wedding garment, and says to him, "*Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.*" He then commands him to be taken away and cast into outer darkness, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. The wedding garment is the righteousness of the incarnate God, which was wrought out by Jesus Christ in the room and place of believers, by his active and passive obedience; by his holy life and bloody death. By this he fulfilled the precepts of the law in its intrinsic demands, paid its penalty, and satisfied the justice of God in all its claims, for all the blood bought travail of his soul. This righteousness they receive in the day of their conversion to God. God, the Father, by a judicial act of the court of heaven, imputes it to them for justification in the very moment they embrace Christ by a living faith. Like a spotless robe it covers them before the justice of God. Therefore, says the church, "*I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garment of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.*" When clothed in the righteousness of Christ—in point of justification, God sees no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel. It is in this dress, in this glorious white robe, that you must appear at Christ's earthly table, next Sabbath day. And in this glorious white robe you shall appear at the upper table on the top of Mount Zion, in the fields of Paradise under the shadow of the tree of life. It is this that covers all the ransomed millions, redeemed out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people upon the earth. Hence it is said, they are "*clothed in white robes;*" and St. John, speaking of the Lamb's wife, says, "*To her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*" And the blessed Redeemer saith, "*Thou hast a few names in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.*"

I ask you now, have you this wedding garment? are you dressed in this glorious white robe? If you have received it, you feel yourselves as naked and destitute of a righteousness, as

a new born infant, of covering. You have been stripped entirely naked before God of every rag and tatter of your *own* righteousness—you have felt the arrows of the Almighty sticking fast in your hearts and the poison thereof drinking up your spirits. You have seen your guilty soul suspended over the bottomless pit of a burning hell—you have felt the very foretastes of the torments of the damned—all hopes of mercy almost gone and scarce a *peradventure the Lord will be merciful*, remaining.

If you have received this blessed robe, this has been your resolution—I'll go to Jesus; and if I perish, it shall be at his feet, crying for pardon; and if I am damned and lost, it shall be while praying for mercy. And in the most helpless and desperate condition, the almighty Jesus has come to your relief. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus, has broke in upon your soul. You have been enraptured with the glory, the beauty, and excellency of his person and offices; you have seen all the attributes centering and shining in their meridian splendor in the face of a lovely Jesus; you have seen the divine law magnified and made honorable by his bloody sufferings and dying agonies, and the flowing sword of Justice cooled in his heart's blood; and you felt the burden of your guilt swept away by the red tide of the Redeemer's blood; you have seen such preciousness and all sufficiency in him, that if you had ten thousand souls, you could have trusted him with all.

2nd. Another qualification necessary for meeting with Christ—is *the comfortable and spiritual evidences of a life of sanctification*. A progressive life of sanctification is the sure and unquestionable evidence of regeneration. Regeneration and sanctification are as inseparably connected as the sun and light; as the living fountain, and the stream which flows from it, as life and breath. Sanctification of the life of holiness, is the grand characteristic of all genuine followers of Christ. Holiness is the great object and end of God in the election and predestination to eternal glory.—Saith the apostle, “*He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.*” It is the object also of effectual calling: “*For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*” And indeed, the great end of Christ's mission into the world—of his incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension, was to deliver his people from sin—to make them holy here, that they might be prepared for perfect holiness in the heavenly state. “*Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.*” And the great design of the cutting off of Mesiah, was “*to finish the transgression, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.*” John the Baptist styles him, “*the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;*” and Peter says he is exalted “*a prince and a Saviour for to give*

repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins;" and says John, "*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*"

The evidences of sanctification are—

1st. A universal obedience to all the commands of God. The Lord Jesus Christ lays this down as the prime criterion by which his followers are known and distinguished from the world, "*If you love me, keep my commandments.*" "*Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you,*" "*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*" "*If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

2nd. Another evidence of sanctification in all the followers of Christ is, they bear his image. Saith Paul, "*And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.*" They have the spirit, temper and disposition of Christ. "*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*" The same mind is in them that was in Christ—they are made partakers of the divine nature—they bring forth the fruits of their hearts and lives; which is, "*Love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,*" and therefore they "*add to their faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance,*" &c.

3d. A third evidence of sanctification, is mortification or self denial; crucifying every sinful appetite, disposition, and propensity; cutting off right hand, and plucking out right eye, sins; and bearing the cross for Christ's sake: "*and they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*"

3d. Another qualification necessary for those who would meet with Jesus, is much *spiritual prayer*; vehement wrestling with God, asking in the name of Jesus, pleading with the Lord, and holding the God of truth to his word and promises; and this even to a degree of holy violence. This is an employment, pleasing to Christ; he loves to see it among his spiritual children, "*O my dove, thou art in the cliffs of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs; let me see thy countenance; let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.*" To encourage his humble followers to be vehement in his pleasant exercise, he has given them the most gracious promises, and has pledged the veracity of a God for their fulfillment.—"*And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*" "*If two of you shall agree, on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.*" "*Ask me of things to come, concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands, command ye me.*" "*Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*"

My christian friends, who intend next Sabbath to own Christ publicly before the world, have you not for weeks and months past, been wrestling with God for the church of Christ—for the outpouring of the Spirit—for the conversion of your Christless children, friends, and neighbors—and are you not waiting with longing, anxiety, for the approaching solemnity, ardently desiring, that when Christ comes to meet his people, he will graciously grant you the answer to your prayers? Well, let me tell you, if you have prayed in faith, there is not one petition which you have asked in the name of Jesus, which shall be lost; for we are told that there are "*golden vials*" stored up in heaven "*full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.*" Can we suppose that Christ has a *golden vial* filled with the faithful prayers from Henderson county? If this is so, doubtless he will bring them with him next Sabbath, and may be, he will give gracious answers of peace. Who can tell but his arm of power may awake and put on strength, as in ancient times? Then, should we see great things, indeed; we would see the wilderness and solitary place made glad, and the desert rejoicing and blossoming as the rose; the dry parched land becoming a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water. Then, the blind would receive their sight—the lame would walk—the lepers would be cleansed—and the dead would be raised to life.

4th. Another qualification, necessary for meeting with Christ, is a heart hungering, thirsting, panting, fainting and almost dying for his presence. It is those who come in this way to the wells of salvation with empty pitchers, crying, give me Christ or I die; who, like David are panting for God as the hunted heart for the cooling water brooks; who are thirsting and fainting, as in a dry and parched land where there is no water, to see his power and glory. These will be feasted at Christ's table on the hidden manna. The promises of God are pledged for it.—"*Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.*" "*When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord will hear them; I, the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.*"

5th. A fifth qualification is a heart humbled at the foot of the cross; a heart humbled, broken and bleeding for sin, under a faith's view of the glory of God in Christ. This is a sweet qualification for the table of the Lord. A broken, bleeding, mangled Christ, and a broken bleeding heart, make a blissful meeting at a communion table. He who comes with a bleeding heart, to a bleeding Christ, shall receive the blessing. Saith the Psalmist, "*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*" "*Thus saith the high and loft-*

ty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

6th. Much of the Spirit of Christ, is another and indispensable qualification for meeting with Christ: much of the loving, gracious and forgiving spirit, and temper which was in Jesus.

When Christ meets with his children, he cannot be hid—strange things are to be seen when he comes into a congregation, and meets his people in the administration of his supper, or in any of the ordinances of his house. The breath of the Lord breathes the four winds of heaven upon the valley of dry bones.—There is a noise and a shaking—and the bones begin to come together—bone to his fellow bone. While the people of God are refreshed with the new wine of Canaan and are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, the poor unconverted feel the light of the Divine Spirit breaking in upon their minds; they see themselves guilty, lost, condemned sinners under the frown and curse of an angry God, suspended over the eternal, bottomless, burning hell. Hence they are dreadfully alarmed at their situation; and begin to cry for mercy, and ask what they shall do to be saved. The gazing world are struck with astonishment—all appears strange and unaccountable to them: they term it madness, foolishness, distraction, delusion hypocrisy, and I know not what. Here the people of God need much of the Spirit of Christ. It becomes them to repulse all the anger, the opposition and hard speaking of the unconverted, with the all conquering power of the love of Jesus. They should not get angry, nor even feel a hard spirit towards them. If the poor things laugh, and scoff and jest, at the work of God—if they get mad and treat it with bitterness and enmity—it is because they are blind and do not understand it. Therefore, they know not what they do. The apostle says if the Jews had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; and if the poor unconverted knew that it was the work of God which they are opposing and persecuting, they would not do it for their souls. Then, instead of feeling resentment, the followers of Jesus should pity and pray for them, and weep over them, and ever feel towards them, the spirit of their dying Lord to his murderers, when they were sporting with his agonies, and mocking at his dying groans;—“*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*”

SERMON XXXIV.

CHRIST WONDERFUL IN HIS PERSON, OFFICES AND WORKS.

“His name shall be called wonderful.” ISAIAH ix, 6.

There is no name in heaven or earth, which presents a theme so glorious and so lovely, as that of Jesus. There is none which excites in the mind reflections so pleasing, so delightful and astonishing. Says Solomon—“*thy name is an ointment poured forth.*”

When Saint Augustine had read one of the most learned treatises of the heathen philosophers, he observed that one thing rendered it tasteless and insipid, viz. *“The name of Jesus had nowhere been mentioned.”* All the names and divine characters by which he is made known in the scriptures of eternal truth, express to lost sinners, the very blessedness of heaven and the essence of eternal life—complete salvation from sin and hell: in a word, the highest happiness which an infinite God can bestow on finite creatures can receive, or possibly enjoy through the ceaseless ages of eternity. What name can sound so sweet and precious in the ears of a poor awakened and despairing sinner, as Immanuel—God with us, in our nature? What name so lovely and endearing as Jesus—a Saviour from sin and all its dreadful consequences? or Christ the anointed of God—one chosen, ordained and set apart by the unerring wisdom of a Three-one-God, to redeem sinners from guilt and hell. View him as Jehovah, possessing the nature and attributes of the Godhead—as I AM that I AM, clothed with all the incommunicable perfections of the Deity—as Alpha and Omega—the beginning and the ending—existing from eternity to eternity, and without beginning of days or ending of life. View him as the promised Messiah, assuming our nature, veiling his divinity in flesh, fulfilling the law, satisfying divine justice and dying in the room and place of a lost world—rising from the dead—ascending far above the

visible heavens—filling the mediatorial throne at the right hand of God—and appearing in his two natures before the eternal throne, as our friend and intercessor.

Our text takes all the infinite glories and beauties of his person in one collective view. “*His name shall be called wonderful.*” Here his nature, his attributes, his incarnation, his humiliation, his love, his sufferings, his atoning sacrifice to the law and justice of God—with all the blessed effects of his obedience and death, are held up to the view of all adoring worlds. The astonished angels stoop down, with eager desires to look into these shoreless and unfathomable wonders—wonders which shall be new, while eternity runs its perpetual round. Then with great propriety his “*name shall be called wonderful.*” The prophet Isaiah, by divine inspiration, places the Lord Jesus before us in his two wonderful natures, as the object of praise gratitude and wonder. “*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*”

The particular name or character which is the subject for our consideration, is, “*His name shall be called Wonderful.*”

In attending to the subject, we shall pursue the following method—

I. Shew in what respect his name shall be called Wonderful, and illustrate the propriety of the epithet.

II. Mention some of the sweet seasons, when Christ appears wonderful to the believing sinner.

I. Shew in what respect he may be called Wonderful.

1st. He is wonderful when considered in his person and his two natures, as Immanuel—God with us. View him as God-man, or God manifested in the flesh, and you will discover wonders that strike the adoring millions round the throne of God, with astonishment. You will behold Omnipotence, and mortal weakness united in one; the ancient of days who existed from all eternity, becoming a helpless infant; the eternal First Cause of all things, born of a woman, nursed and suckled by a creature which he had made and preserved in existence; the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, and humbles himself to behold the things that are done in heaven, appearing in the form of a servant, accounted a worm and no man, despised and rejected by the world. You will see the God of glory, the source of all joy and happiness, become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; the Eternal Jehovah, whose power formed all worlds and upholds them in being—who has the most unquestionable right to govern the vast empire of the universe,—a man so poor and destitute that he complains that he hath not where to lay his head, while the foxes have holes and the birds of the

air have nests—so poor that he had not a farthing to pay his tribute, until he wrought a miracle to procure it;—the King of kings and Lord of lords, the sovereign Lawgiver of the Universe, and yet made under the law: he, who obeyed every requisition of the law, enduring its curse, and suffering its whole penalty: the great eternal, the fountain of life, and well-spring of existence, sinking in the agonies of death—and falling a pallid and lifeless corpse!

The sacred scriptures tell us, that he is the root and offspring of David—his son and his Lord; that he was made of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh—and yet existing before Abraham was. The prophet Isaiah who beheld his glory and rejoiced to see his day, declares, that *he is a child born, a son given; but yet the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.* Zechariah speaks of him as a man; yet as one that is God's fellow. Says the evangelist John, “*In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*” Yet he declares, “*The word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*” Speaking of Jesus Christ, Paul says, “*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*” “*But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*”

There is no doctrine in the scriptures more clearly taught, or that is more evident and incontestable, than the Godhead or Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The names of God, which express his self-existence and independence, which represent him as the Eternal First Cause of all things, are directly applied to Jesus Christ. The angel that appeared to Moses in the burning bush, was certainly none else than Jesus Christ, the angel of the covenant—none other than the Son of God; for he declares that he is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and calls himself the I AM that I AM, which is the incommunicable name of God, and cannot be applied to any created being. Jehovah is one of the incommunicable names of the Deity, and it is given to Jesus Christ in divers passages of the Old Testament.

We are informed by a learned writer, that the first syllable in the name Jehovah, signifies future time, the second, time present, and the third, time past. If this be correct, the divine character ascribed to Christ in the book of the Revelation, amounts to the same as Jehovah, or I AM; and this proves him to be

truly and essentially God, even Deity itself. Such for instance as "*Alpha and Omega*"—the first and the last, "*the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*" The prophet says, "*I saw, also, the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple;*" and the six winged seraphims crying one to another, saying, "*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.*" And in the revelation of John, this is applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. The same evangelist says, the "*Word was God.*" Thomas calls him "*my Lord and my God;*" Paul styles him *God over all, and blessed forever*, and terms his blood that was shed for the remission of sins, the blood of God; and the Spirit represents the eternal Father calling him God. "*Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*" The works of creation and providence, the bringing innumerable worlds and systems of worlds out of nothing, and supporting them from age to age in the most perfect harmony, are the peculiar properties of Deity; and they are also ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ.—"*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made, that was made.*" *By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him.*"—"*By him all things consist.*"—Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence, are attributed to Christ; the same worship that is peculiar to God as its object, is paid to him. The ordinance of baptism, and the apostolical benediction, are performed in his name equally with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Yet says the apostle, "*Great is the mystery of Godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*"

The divine and human nature though infinitely distinct, were so strangely and mystically united in him, as to form but one individual person; so that whatsoever is predicated of either of these natures, is also predicated of the person possessing both; hence, when here upon earth, in the days of his flesh, he is styled the son of man who is in heaven, and his blood which was shed for the remission of sins is called the blood of God.

"What, though the waters struck with dread,
Rise up and form a pyramid—
Though floods should gush from rocks or stones,
Or living souls from wither'd bones:
To hear of an incarnate God,
Is yet more wonderful and odd;
Or to behold how God, most high,
Could in our nature bleed and die.

What, though the bright angelic forms,
Degraded were to crawling worms—
These creatures were but creatures still,
Transformed at their Creator's will.—
Though creatures change a thousand ways,
It cannot such amazement raise,
Nor such a scene as this display:
The Eternal Word, a piece of clay—
God-man, a strange contexture fix'd;
Nor yet confus'd, nor yet commix'd;
Yet still a mystery grand and fresh—
The Spirit infinite made flesh."

2nd. He was wonderful in his incarnation, humiliation, his sufferings and death.

The circumstances of his birth, were contemptible and abasing beyond conception, and at the same time the most grand and majestic, that ever attended the birth of any of the sons of men. He is not born in a great Metropolis renowned for wisdom, wealth, and grandeur, but in the little village, Bethlehem. He is not born of a royal princess, clothed in imperial pomp and splendor, with thousands of vassals bowing at his feet; but of a poor woman in indigent circumstances. It is true, she was of the family of David, of the blood royal of the Jewish nation; but at this time the sceptre had departed from Judah. David's crown was levelled with the dust, and his family sunk into contempt and obscurity. He is not born in a magnificent palace, attended by numerous servants; but in a stable surrounded by lowing oxen, and with nothing but a manger for a cradle. He is not clad in purple and scarlet, and fine linen, but instead of these, he is wrapped in swaddling bands. O! what humiliation! What degrading circumstances!—But at the same time, never did the most dignified character of Adam's race come into the world, attended with such august grandeur and majesty. It is true, his birth is not proclaimed by the voice of a herald, in obedience to the mandate of an imperial monarch; but an army of bright shining seraphs, leave their celestial abodes—they come, flying from the highest heavens to announce the glorious event. They celebrate it with loud hallelujahs in the air—they proclaim it in the sweetest music of heaven.—*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.* They tell the shepherds, "Behold," we "bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Though his lodging is poor and contemptible, a glorious star leaves its orbit and bends its course to Bethlehem, to lead the wise men of the East as worshippers at his feet. View his whole life, and a scene of wonder marks every period from his

cradle to the grave. Poverty, reproach and contempt—cruel slanders and bitter persecutions—attend him through all his life. We are informed, that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: he was despised and rejected of men; but yet he was the fountain of comfort and real happiness. Wherever he went, he diffused joy and consolation. He makes the dumb to sing his praises—the lame to leap for joy—the deaf to hear his wondrous doctrine—and the blind to see his glory.—Though he appeared in the form of a servant, destitute of the comforts of life; yet under such disguise, never did there appear on earth, a prince attended with pomp and majesty so grand and glorious. Health and sickness—life and death—were under his control. The winds, the storms and the raging billows of the sea, which no earthly power could command, obeyed him: and death and the grave durst not refuse their prey when he demanded it. He did not walk upon tapestry and carpets of gold, like many of the kings of the earth: but more grand and Godlike, he walked upon the sea, and the obedient waves supported their master's feet. Indeed, all creation, except sinful man, acknowledged him to be their Creator.

He had no treasures of gold, but when in want of money, the sea sent it to him in the mouth of a fish. He had no barns nor fields of corn; but when he made a feast, five loaves and two fishes, were more than sufficient for thousands. Behold the circumstances of his sufferings and bloody death, and wonders are unfolded which afford a theme which shall be new throughout eternity: wonders which will forever excite the astonishment of adoring millions around the throne of God. See him, who measures the ocean in the hollow of his hand, and comprehendeth the dust of the earth in a measure—who weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in balances, and takes up the isles as a very little thing.—seized by a bloody band of soldiers, worms of the dust, who received their existence from him, and were upheld in being by his Almighty power.—See him bound fast like a thief and led before a mortal—there, found innocent, yet condemned! But how is this possible? Shall feeble dying worms bind their Almighty Maker—Him who sinks the pomp, the glory, and the power, of Pharaoh and his host, to the bottom of the sea—and strikes Sennacherib's mighty army dead in a moment?

Faith discovers Godlike wonders here. It was cords of love that bound him fast—love stronger than death, which passeth knowledge and transcends all created understanding. See him who stretches out the heavens as a curtain, who orders the rising and setting of the sun, and counts the number of the stars; him who covers millions of naked souls with the spotless robe of his law-fulfilling righteousness—stripped naked, and bound to a

pillar like a slave or criminal, and scourged, till all his bones might be counted! See that face which is fairer than the sons of men—which is white and ruddy—brighter than ten thousand suns, spat upon, bruised and mangled—red with gore and swollen with blows.

Behold the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who ruled in the armies of heaven above, and doth his pleasure among the inhabitants of this earth—who puts crowns of never fading glory upon millions of pardoned rebels—himself crowned with thorns, and his tender temples pierced with streaming wounds! See him after all this, forced to carry his heavy cross through the streets of Jerusalem, forth at the gates, and up the mount, to the place of execution. Behold him nailed to the accursed tree—his hands and feet pierced with spikes! And now see the Lamb of God—the holy and innocent Jesus, suspended between the heavens and the earth, and suffering the greatest torment. But all the excruciating pains of the body are small and tolerable, when compared with the intense sorrows of his soul. The weighty vengeance of God, incensed against sin, falls upon him with infinite weight; the sins of the whole elect world seize upon him at once, like so many deadly vipers; the curse of the divine law, which brought legions of angels that excelled in strength from the heaven of heavens, to the bottomless pit of hell, was laid upon him in its full extent. He endured in his soul and body, what was equivalent to all the pains, the tortures, and the fiery torments of hell, which all his ransomed blood-bought millions would otherwise have endured through the ceaseless ages of eternity. But the most intolerable ingredient in all his sufferings was the hiding of his Father's face. The blissful smiles of Jehovah's love, which he had enjoyed from the earliest period of eternity, are now withdrawn. The Sun of Righteousness is eclipsed in midnight darkness. Now all comfort from heaven and earth is gone. Now hear the incarnate God, with groans which shake the universe, crying out in the most intolerable anguish, "*Eloi! Eloi! lama sabachthani!*!" The rocks are rent—the mountains shake—and all nature is convulsed. The veil of the temple is rent in twain from the top to the bottom—the graves give up their dead—the heavens are clothed in sackcloth—and the sun hides himself in the darkness of night. He dies! yea, the great Eternal—and is covered with blood!

"Jesus drinks the bitter cup,
The wine press treads alone;
He tears the graves and mountains up,
With his expiring groan!
Lo! the powers of heaven he shakes!
Nature in convulsion lies;

The earth's profoundest centre quakes—
The great Jehovah dies!"

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ, however it may appear to sinful men, was certainly the most glorious and grand event, which God, angels, mankind, or devils ever witnessed. Although crucified in weakness, and suffering ignominious death as a malefactor, by his blood, he purchased salvation and complete redemption for lost sinners. Never did the glories and beauties of the Deity shine with such splendor as when they beamed from the bruised face of the dying Son of God. Says McLaurin, were all the light of the world, the light of the sun, and stars, collected into one stupendous mass, it would be midnight darkness, when compared to the glory which shines in the bloated, mangled visage of Jesus, red with gore, covered with marks of scorn, covered with marks of scorn, swelled with strokes and pale with death. Here shines spotless justice, incomprehensible wisdom, and infinite love all at once; none of them darkens or eclipses the other; every one gives a lustre to the rest: they mingle their beams, and shine with united eternal splendor.

God's love for his people is from everlasting to everlasting; but there is no manifestation of it known or conceivable to us, that is to be compared to this. The light of the sun is always the same, but it shines brighter to us at noon-day. When Christ was on the cross, was the noon tide of everlasting love—the meridian splendor of eternal mercy. There were many bright manifestations of the same love before; but they were like the light of the morning, which shines more and more unto the perfect day; and that perfect day was when Christ was on the cross, when darkness covered the whole earth. It was indeed a spectacle worthy the admiration and astonishment of the universe, to see the despised Gallilean turning all the artillery of hell back upon itself—to see him entangling the rulers of the darkness of this world; in their own nets—defeating their designs with their own stratagems. They induced one of his disciples to betray him; another to deny him. They made the Jews accuse, and the Roman soldiers crucify him. But in all this, He whose name is Wonderful, out-generalled the Old Serpent.

The mighty lion of the tribe of Judah proved too powerful for the roaring lion of hell. The unparalleled cruelty of devils and men; yea, the most horrid, hideous sin which the Devil ever prompted man to commit, is overruled by the mysterious wisdom of God to effect the pardon and salvation of innumerable millions—to make an end of all sin and bring in an everlasting righteousness.

3rd. He is wonderful in his love and compassion to poor lost sinners. The love of Christ will appear God-like and wonderful, if we consider its nature and properties.

1st. It is *everlasting*. Infinite ages before the heavens or the earth had a being—before Adam was formed or angels created, the heart of Jesus was fixed upon the salvation of lost sinners. Therefore, says he, by his prophet Jeremiah, “*I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*” Even then he looked forward for millions of ages to come—he beheld them in their blood—in the deep and horrible pit of an unconverted state; and in the early counsels of eternity, he engaged in the covenant of peace, to assume human nature and redeem them with his blood.

2nd. *It is sovereign, free and unmerited love.* There was nothing amiable in any of the wretched family of Adam to excite his love; but every thing to move his abhorrence and displeasure. They were all blind and dead under the curse of the law—in a state of the most hostile enmity against God—filthy, deformed, polluted and hateful. Here the adoring hosts are struck with wonder—the love of Jesus passes by rebellious angels—consigning them to the vengeance of eternal fire—and displays its boundless glory, in the salvation and redemption of lost sinners of Adam’s race, who as justly deserved the lowest hell. But again—

3rd. It is an *unsolicited love*. No guilty sinner will ever seek an interest in the love and favor of God. They are all bent upon their own destruction. Not one of so many ruined millions, will attempt to repent, to forsake sin, and fly from the wrath to come, till the almighty, all-conquering love of Jesus arrests him, makes him willing in the day of God’s power, and plucks him as a brand from the burning.

It will appear, that the love of the God-man, Christ Jesus, is truly wonderful, if we consider the infinite price which he has paid for the redemption of sinners from sin and hell. Thousands of rams, thousands of rivers of oil, the wealth of the Indies, the mines of Mexico and Peru, and ten thousand worlds of angels, given as a sacrifice, would be a price too small to atone for the guilt of one sin. The whole human race must be damned. Adam and all the innumerable millions of his posterity, must sink to the bottomless pit of hell, or an infinite satisfaction must be given.

When there was no eye to pity, no created arm to bring deliverance, the love of Jesus was stronger than death. All the floods of God’s vengeance due to sin, could not drown it. Love brought him from his topless throne of glory to a manger, from the manger to the cross—from thence to the grave. He comes leaping over the burning mountains of divine vengeance, the curse of the law, and chains of offended justice—and stands in the sinner’s stead. “*He was wounded for our transgressions, he*

was bruised for our iniquities." He dies, the just for the unjust: he pays the infinite price of man's ransom, completely satisfies divine justice with his blood, and cries, It is finished.

The love of Jesus will appear wonderful and God-like, if we consider his anxiety and importunity for sinners' salvation. He follows them from country to country—from Sabbath to Sabbath—from year to year—as though he would take no denial. He stands at the door of their hearts and knocks—he calls by his providences—by the voice of mercy—and by the voice of his judgments. He calls by his word—by his faithful ministers—by the alarming voice of conscience—by the motions—drawings and internal calls of the Divine Spirit. He comes like a suppliant to their doors—he prays them as on bended knees, to be reconciled to God. He courts them by his groans, and bloody sweat in the garden, and by Mount Calvary's scene of agonizing torture. Yea, his wounds—his pierced hands and feet—his streaming blood—his dying agonies and expiring groans,—proclaim with a voice louder than thunder, the unbounded love and bleeding compassion of his heart, for poor dying sinners, and his gracious willingness to receive even the vilest of them. Poor guilty sinners! if the terrors of a God will not alarm you—if your own interest, and your best happiness have no weight with you—I ask, can your hearts remain unaffected? can they be proof against the infinite love, the streaming blood, the flowing tears, and expiring groans of the almighty and lovely Jesus? Suppose he were this day to appear to you in the same form in which he was seen when on earth, sweating great drops of blood, accused, insulted, bruised, scourged and nailed to the cross: suppose he should turn to you with a countenance full of love and pity, and drenched with blood and tears, and say, behold sinners, and see what I suffer for you; see at what a price I purchase your life; see how I love you; and I have only this to ask in return—that you will forsake your murdering sins which now torment me—that you will love and serve me—and accept of that salvation, which I now purchase for you with the blood of my heart: this I ask with all the importunity of my last breath—grant me this and I am satisfied:—what answer would you give?

4th. He is a wonderful Godlike Saviour, if we consider the astonishing effects of his mediation, his death, and atonement.—And what are they? God is glorified; all the attributes of the Deity are displayed in beauty and glory beyond what men and angels ever saw or conceived; the divine law is magnified and made honorable; and justice satisfied. Millions of condemned rebels are pardoned, justified, and sanctified—raised from the lowest abyss of misery, and elevated to the summit of glory, to the perfection of blessedness.

The gates of everlasting mercy are opened wide. The holy, stern and inflexible justice of God received a more ample and glorious satisfaction in the streaming blood and breaking heart of Jesus, than it could have obtained by the damnation in hell of all Adam's race, through boundless eternity.

But O! the glorious crop of repenting sinners, happy Christians—brands plucked from the burning, which have sprung up from the blood of a dying Christ! Says our Lord, "*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*" If Jesus had not come into the earth and died, he would have abode alone—he would have enjoyed his native heaven in solitude, as to any of the fallen race of man. But by his dying, and lying entombed in the earth, he has produced a large increase. One dying Christ has produced thousands and millions of living Christians. These tender plants of righteousness—these trees of God's own planting have sprung up, and will spring up, in every age and generation of the world,—an exceeding great multitude that no man can number, redeemed out of all nations, and kindred and tongues, and people upon earth. Search for the foundation of each one of them, and you will find them deeply rooted in the blood of Christ.

Here another wonder presents itself. These happy souls plucked by the almighty arm of Jesus from the gaping jaws of hell, ransomed by his blood, and conquered by his love, shall be transplanted into the Paradise of God: they shall be with Jesus where he is, and shall forever behold his glory; and while walking the streets of the New Jerusalem, and singing the new song with all the ransomed blood bought millions, through all eternity, they shall be lost in wonder. New wonders in the nature, essence and attributes of God, will be unfolded; and wonders upon wonders, in the redeeming grace and dying love of Jesus, will be still breaking upon their sight. And they will be wonders to themselves—each one looking upon himself as the greatest wonder of redeeming grace.

II. Mention some of the sweet seasons when Christ appears wonderful to the believing sinner.

1st. In the morning of conversion, when the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus, breaks into his soul—when the Almighty Saviour appears for his deliverance and rescues him from the horrible pit and miry clay,—the tongue of an archangel cannot tell how wonderful he appears; wonderful in his beauty, in his glory and in the excellency of his person and offices; wonderfully lovely, precious and suitable to his situation; wonderfully glorious, compassionate and willing to save to the very uttermost. View the condition of the poor, guilty, awakened, despairing sinner, who feels him-

self just upon the slippery brink of an eternal, bottomless, burning hell; the keen arrows of the Almighty sticking fast in his soul, and the poison thereof drinking up his spirits; the burning beams of wrath kindled in his heart; the hope of mercy almost gone; the horrors of midnight surrounding him on every side: how God can pardon, justify and save such a hell-deserving wretch, or how to believe, to act faith, or come to Christ, is a dark and inextricable mystery. He feels himself as helpless as the new born infant weltering in its blood. Justice frowns—clouds of vengeance gather thick, with horrible blackness—hell yawns and gapes to receive him; God must help, or he is damned and lost forever. Just in this helpless, hopeless, dreadful case, Jesus appears for his rescue—the glorious plan of salvation is unfolded—the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines into his soul—his burden of sin is washed away by the blood of Christ. The peace of God that passeth all understanding, joy unspeakable and full of glory, flow through his whole soul. O! how wonderful does Jesus then appear! Wonderful in his person—wonderful in his two natures—wonderful in all his offices. All the incomprehensible wonders of the Godhead shine forth in him in all their splendor. Heaven-astonishing wonders strike his adoring eyes. The holiness of God, how wonderfully lovely—the law of God, how amiable and desirable—God's word and promises, how sweet and soul-refreshing—the ordinance of God, how delightful—his hopes of heaven, how wonderfully glorious and happying.

2nd. Christ appears wonderful beyond conception to the mourning and believing sinner, when he surprises him with sweet views of his glory, after a long and dark night of desertion.—One wonder which strikes him with astonishment is, the Godlike love of Christ, which overleaps the horrible mountains of his backsliding and hardness of heart, the base ingratitude and unbelief by which he has so often pierced, wounded and crucified the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame,—that Jesus, after all this, should embrace him in his arms, kiss him with the kisses of his mouth and bring heaven into his soul: this sinks him below the dust with shame, self abhorrence, and brokenness of heart, even while feeling the dawnings of heaven in his soul.

Another wonder which enraptures his happy mind, in the firmness and stability of the everlasting covenant of peace. He sees his righteousness, his strength, his hope, his salvation, his heaven, and his all treasured up in Christ. O, says the humble, happy soul, had my foundation been in myself, I should have been lost and undone forever—had my eternal salvation been suspended upon one good thought or holy desire, I should have sunk to the lowest hell; but, glory to God in the highest, my all is in Christ:

A consideration of this great discrepancy of opinions, will at once convince us of the necessity of the most particular investigation of the scriptures; for they testify of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord having just entered upon his mediatorial work, was frequently engaged in working miracles, which abundantly proved the divinity of his person and the authority of his mission. This roused the malice and opposition of the Jews against him. They were particularly offended, because he proclaimed himself to be the Son of God—a divine person—God equal with the Father.

In answer to their objections, he refers them to the testimony of the scriptures, the oracles of God, which they professed to believe, and in which they hoped to obtain eternal life. *“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.”*—As if he had said—I am the woman’s promised seed, that should bruise the serpent’s head, the Shiloh which was to come when the sceptre had departed from Judah—the prophet foretold by Moses—the branch and root of Jesse, predicted by Isaiah—I am the great antitype of all the Jewish types and sacrifices—the object of all the prophecies;—therefore, *“search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.”*

The doctrine contained in these words, is, that the testimony in the scriptures concerning Jesus Christ, exhibits the only sure foundation of hope for eternal life. In speaking farther upon this subject, we shall—

Exhibit Jesus Christ according to the testimony of the Scriptures.

I. The scriptures testify that the Lord Jesus Christ is, truly, and essentially, God—co-equal, co-essential and co-eternal with the Father.—*“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”*—*“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.”* *“In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.”* Alluding to Jesus Christ, Paul says, *“Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;”* *“Who is over all, God blessed forever.”* *“But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God is forever and ever. I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.”*

The scriptures testify that Jesus Christ is possessed of all the attributes and perfections of the Godhead.

Is eternity or everlasting duration of existence, without beginning or ending, a peculiar and incommunicable attribute of Deity? The scriptures ascribe this to Jesus Christ. *“But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”* This passage of scripture is applied to Jesus Christ by the Jewish Sanhedrim.

Is immensity or Omnipresence an attribute of the Deity? It also is ascribed to Jesus Christ by the testimony of scripture. *“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”* This undoubtedly implies the Omnipresence of his essence. Though the humble followers of Jesus, scattered over all Europe, Asia, Africa and America, should be met together, in ten thousand places, at the same time, in the name of Christ, according to this promise he will be in the midst of them all. And of the same purport is his promise to his faithful ministers.—*“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”*

The scriptures testify that Christ is Omniscient, possessed of all knowledge. *“Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.”* This is Peter's reply when questioned by Jesus concerning his attachment to him. The scriptures apply to Christ all the names peculiar to the Deity. Is *Jehovah*, applied only to the Lord of hosts? It is also given to Christ. *“His name shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”* *Jehovah* is here translated *LORD* in capital letters as in most places. Is *I AM* an incommunicable name of God expressive of his eternity, self existence, independence, and incomprehensibility. This, also, is ascribed to Christ. He applies it to himself, when the Jews say, *“Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?”* He saith unto them, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was I AM.”* When Thomas saw him after his resurrection and was convinced that he was risen, termed him *“My Lord and my God.”*

The testimony of scripture ascribes to him the peculiar words and operations of the Deity. *“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made;”* *“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were made by him and for him.”*

They testify that he is the proper object of the same worship as that which is due to God.

The Eastern Magi worshipped him when an infant at Bethlehem. His disciples, after his resurrection, held him by the feet and worshipped him. The Eternal Father says, "*Let all the angels of heaven worship him.*" When tempted of the Devil in the wilderness, our Lord replies, "*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*"

The scriptures also testify of Christ, that although essential to God, yet he is truly man in our nature. John the evangelist tells us, that the eternal "*Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.*" Paul tells us that although in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with him, he "*made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men;*" "*For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.*" Indeed the histories of the four evangelists abundantly prove his human nature.

They testify, that although truly God and truly man, yet he is but one person—that in him the divine and human natures, though infinitely distinct, are united. Therefore, he is called, "*the son of man which is in heaven;*" and his blood which was shed for the remission of sins, is styled the *blood of God.*

II. The scriptures testify that this Jesus laid down his life for guilty, lost sinners; that he died in their law room and place. But say the opposers of this doctrine, *law room* and *place* are not scriptural terms.—This makes no difference provided they are scriptural ideas. It is said that he was "*made the surety of a better covenant.*" Now a surety stands in the lawroom and place of a principal debtor.

Saith Isaiah, "*He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.*" "*Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh.*" He was "*made to be sin for us, who knew no sin.*"

That Christ died to satisfy the justice of God for the sins of guilty, fallen man will appear, very clearly, if we consider that he is often called an "*offering for sin,*" "*a sacrifice to God.*" In Isaiah it is said, "*Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin:* and again, Christ "*hath given himself for us, an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling Saviour.*" He hath appeared, "*to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*" A sacrifice is something offered up to heaven to atone for sin—to appease the anger of the Deity. If this be correct, then Christ suffered to appease the wrath of God. The scriptures expressively assert that God gave his Son, that he sent him into the world to atone for the sins of men. "*God so loved the world, that he*

gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He "spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all." "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands, have crucified and slain."

But for what purpose? The apostle tells us that God set him forth, "to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins—that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

III. The scriptures testify that the work of redemption is complete—that the infinite price of man's ransom has been paid to the uttermost farthing.

Our Lord, speaking of the mission of the Spirit informs us, that "When he should come, he would reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believed not on him; of righteousness, because I go to my Father." This implies, that his almighty, all sufficient righteousness is complete; for if the work of redemption had not been finished, he would not have ascended to his Father: but by his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, he has proclaimed to all rational worlds, that he has fulfilled the law, satisfied divine justice, robbed death of his sting, and bruised the Old Serpent's head—and that God can be just and the justifier of the ungodly sinner who believes in Jesus. In reference to this, the apostle says, he "was delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification." "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." And in the boldest language, therefore, the apostle proclaims the all-sufficiency of his merits and mediation to save. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

IV. The scriptures testify that the grand object of Christ's mission into the world was to redeem mankind from sin, to make them holy and prepare them for the heavenly state.

It was foretold that the blessed effect of his suffering and death should be, "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness."

It was declared by the angel to Joseph, before he was born, that his name should be called "Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." John the Baptist styles him, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Peter says, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins."

“The blood of Jesus Christ,” the Son of God, “cleanseth us from all sin.”

V. The scriptures testify, that by the sufferings and death, the merits and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, a door of hope is opened to a guilty world—pardon, salvation, and eternal life are brought near and freely offered to the chief of sinners—to sinners of every name, character or description.

Our Lord commissions preachers of the gospel, and sends them to proclaim a free salvation to every guilty, dying sinner who will accept of it. “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.” To the same purpose are the gracious offers of mercy and salvation made in the prophecy of Isaiah.—“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price.” “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” This glorious, free salvation, which contains all the rich blessings of the new covenant, is represented in scripture under the figure of a marriage feast. It is proclaimed to all guilty sinners of every age, rank and condition, to come, for all things are ready—on God’s part. The ministers of the gospel are commanded to go out into the lanes and streets, the hedges and highways, to use every argument and every persuasion to compel them to come.

VI. The scriptures testify that this Jesus—this Almighty Saviour, and the all sufficient salvation, which he hath purchased, will avail us nothing, unless we submit to the terms upon which they are offered—unless we receive Christ and salvation, and appropriate them to our particular case, as a man receives food and applies it to his appetite. Says Christ, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.”

The terms proposed by the Almighty Sovereign of the Universe, and upon which eternal life and eternal death are suspended, are these: “He that believeth shall be saved—he that believeth not, shall be damned.” “Verily, verily, except a man be born again, born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

VII. The scriptures testify, that those who have received Christ—who are pardoned and justified by his merits and perfect

righteousness, have a knowledge of God and Christ, which the men of the world cannot acquire—which the highest exertion of their minds cannot obtain. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.” This knowledge is communicated by the power and agency of the Spirit of God. “For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” By this knowledge they discover the glory, beauty, and excellency of spiritual and eternal things.—“But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. This knowledge is the very essence of their heaven-born nature. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

They who have received Christ are clad in the spotless robe of his righteousness.—“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me in the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” And therefore says the apostle, “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.”—“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” They are in Christ, and therefore are free from condemnation. “There is, therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” They have the Spirit of Christ, and are led by him, therefore they “walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit,” and they bring forth the fruits of the spirit in their hearts and lives. Says the apostle, “For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” “If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” “The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

The scriptures testify that Christ is the beloved object who engages their warmest affections.—“Unto you, therefore, which believe he is precious”—that Christ is in them, and they in him—that they are so united in Christ, that they are one with him as he is one with the Father: “That they may be one, as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one of us;” “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one;” that they have communion and fellowship with Christ, “Truly, our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son

Jesus Christ;" that they have good evidence of the reality of their love to Christ—they live a life of holy obedience to all his commands—they are growing in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—going on from strength to strength—growing up to the fulness of the stature of perfect men in Christ—that their salvation through the blood of Christ, contains an eternity of blessedness—that Christ is preparing a place, and making all things ready for them, where they shall be forever with him and behold his glory. "In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me."

VIII. The scriptures testify of Christ, that he is ordained by the Father, Supreme Judge of quick and dead; who shall come in all the pomp and grandeur of his Godhead, to fix the everlasting state of all the numberless millions of Adam's race—to take all his blood bought purchase home to their heavenly inheritance; and doom the wicked to everlasting fire. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

The scriptures testify that his coming to judgment will be at a time, when the world leasts expects him; that he will come like a thief in the night, when mankind are sunk in wickedness, dissipation and carnal security; just as the deluge surprised the old world, or as sudden destruction seized and consumed the sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah.

His coming will be open and manifest to the view of all worlds.—"Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."

His appearing in judgment will be unspeakably glorious and majestic. The son of man shall be seen "coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Says the prophet Daniel, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousands and thousands ministered unto him, and

ten thousand times ten thousand before him; the judgment was set and the books were opened."

The scriptures testify that "the dead in Christ shall rise first;" they shall spring from their dusty tombs, beautiful and immortal their bodies fashioned like Christ's glorious body. The graves shall give up their dead—the sea shall give up her dead—death and hell shall give up their dead. Now Adam and his numerous race stand upon the globe, in one vast amazing multitude. Then shall the judge "separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats;" and then he pronounces sentence, saying to those on his right hand, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "Then shall he say to them on the left hand, depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." But Christ and all his redeemed millions, shall ascend to glory, while the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment.

S E R M O N XXXVI.

THE YOUNG INVITED TO COME TO CHRIST.

“Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” JOHN xix, 14.

When Christ was upon earth, some little children were brought unto him, most probably by their parents, that he should lay his hands upon them and pray for them. His disciples, perhaps through ignorance and weakness, discountenanced this, and rebuked those who brought the children. But our Lord interferes, and disapproves of his disciples' conduct, and says, *“Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”*

These words taken in their literal sense, are a strong proof of the propriety of admitting infants into the bosom of the church of Christ. This will appear evident, if we consider the *“kingdom of heaven”* here, to signify either the church upon the earth, or the church triumphant in the glorified state.

But disputation is not our object: we design to enforce the more important duties of religion, in which the salvation of immortal souls is particularly concerned.

We shall accommodate the subject to two important cases. 1st. To the great duty incumbent on parents in leading their children to Christ—in using all rational and prudent exertions to promote their salvation. This is naturally implied in the words, *“Suffer little children and forbid them not.”* 2nd. To the duties incumbent on children and young persons in making every exertion to come to Christ and secure the salvation of their immortal souls. This may be reasonably inferred; for if parents are under obligations to endeavor to bring their children to Christ, surely children are, if possible, more strongly bound to use all means in their power to come to Christ.

Then in attending farther to the subject, we shall pursue the following method.—

I. We shall invite parents to the observation of a few things, by which they are to suffer their children to come to Christ, and not hinder their salvation.

II. Offer to the consideration of young people a few remarks, from which will appear the propriety of their seeking religion, and coming to Christ while young.

III. Shew what it is to come to Christ.

IV. State concisely a few of the advantages of obtaining an interest in Christ, in time of youth.

I. Invite parents to the observation of some things, by which they should suffer their children to come to Christ; and they should do this:

1st. By setting them a pious, godly example. There is nothing which has so powerful an influence on the human mind as example. When children see their parents walking with God—daily keeping his commandments—watching and praying—evidencing by their holy lives and conversation, that they are bound for the heavenly country—thus an abiding conviction is fastened on their minds, of the reality and importance of religion, which disturbs their carnal peace, and places a powerful restraint upon their sinful passions, desires and inclinations; and such convictions often terminate in their conversion and salvation.

But, when children see their parents live from day to day, and year to year, altogether prayerless, never bowing their knees to God in their families, or in secret, they will live prayerless too, and think prayer entirely unnecessary. When they see their parents spend the Sabbath in worldly business—worldly conversation—carnal mirth—and unnecessary visits,—they are sure to follow their example, and think it no harm to profane the holy Sabbath day. When they see their parents get drunk, curse, swear and blaspheme the holy name of God, they suppose all to be right, and will do the same. When they hear their parents jesting and laughing at conversion, regeneration, and the life and power of religion,—calling it delusion, enthusiasm, distraction, and branding as hypocrites all those who profess the name of Jesus, or calling them fools and fanatics,—they will, from the example of their parents, despise religion, and treat it with contempt.

By such means as these, hundreds of parents are guilty of murdering their offspring. They are guilty of the damnation of their children, and their children's children for many generations.

2nd. Parents should endeavor to bring their children to Christ—by restraining them from the ways of sin and hell. A

weighty charge is committed to the care of every parent: they are not only accountable to God for their own souls, but also for the souls of their children. If they do not exert every power to restrain them from sin, and lead them to Christ, the blood of their children's souls will be required at their hands.

In the example of Joshua, we may see what God requires of every parent. "*As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.*" There is another instance of the same kind in the case of Abraham. Says God, "*I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.*" The most intolerable judgments of God fell upon the family of Eli, until they were cut off and destroyed from the earth, because *he* did not restrain his children from their wickedness. If parents desire the salvation of their children—if they wish to see them enter the strait gate, and walk the narrow way to eternal life,—let them withhold them from the ways of sin—let them restrain their children from the abuse of the Sabbath. The profanation of this holy day is one of the crying sins of our land, which, beyond doubt, will draw down the heavy judgments of the Almighty upon the inhabitants of our country in time and through eternity. The express command of the Sovereign of the Universe, is, "*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates.*" He declares that we must keep it holy to the Lord—not finding our own pleasure—not speaking our own words—nor doing our own works on that day. The Lord has reserved the Sabbath as a day for worship, and he claims it as his unquestionable right.

The institution of the Sabbath is an unspeakable blessing to the world. To spend one day in seven, to learn to know God and do his will—to read and study the scriptures—to worship the Lord in public—in private and in secret,—is calculated to promote the welfare of mankind in time, and also in eternity—But alas! is not the Sabbath at present, a school day for vice and wickedness—a day of vanity and folly—a day of visiting, sporting, jesting and laughter?—Is it not a day in which the youth of the present generation, learn more habits of vice and dissipation, than in all the other six? How common is it in every part of our country, for young persons to stroll about on that day in companies—leading each other into every species of wickedness. O my friends, would you suffer your children to come to Christ—for God's sake restrain them from the profanation of the Lord's day. Compel them to spend it in reading, and

attending upon the public and private exercise of worshipping God.

3rd. Would you suffer your children to come to Christ and hinder them not—then teach and instruct them according to your gifts and abilities, in the knowledge of God, and their duty to him: teach them to read the scriptures and understand the doctrines of the Bible. Family religion and instruction is often enjoined upon us in the word of God; and this makes one family a little church of Christ, while the want of it, renders another family a synagogue of the Devil. After having given to the children of Israel the ten commandments and all the statutes of the law, says the Lord, *“These words which I command thee this day, shall be in your heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou risest up.”* *“And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates.”* *“Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”*

Do you wish your children to dwell through eternity in heaven, then teach them the great and important truths of the word of God—teach them that they are fallen, guilty, condemned creatures—teach them that they must be regenerated by the power and agency of the Spirit of Christ, or else they can never see the kingdom of God—teach them the necessity of reading the scriptures, of praying in secret, and improving every internal and external call of the word and Spirit.

My dear friends, is it not evident to a demonstration, that shameful ignorance of God, of the scriptures, and divine things, is one of the damning sins of our country? Are there not many families which have no Bible? Are there not many young men and women, arrived to the years of maturity who have never read ten chapters in it during their whole lives?

Many of our poor unhappy youth, who rank with the great, wealthy, profane, and dissipated characters of the world, must call themselves *Deists*, when they do not know a sentence in the Bible, unless it be some distorted passage, which they have heard from some old sneering infidel, and even then, perhaps, if you would give them the book, they could not find it.

Lastly. Would you suffer your children to come to Christ—warn them of their danger, as from the mouth of God—deal faithfully and honestly with them, that your skirts may be clear from their blood—court them—pray and beseech them, as in the bowels of Christ, to repent, to forsake sin, to pray and cry for mercy, before their day of grace be past. Tell them with tears, and sympathy, and love, of the fulness, the sufficiency, and willingness of Jesus—weep and mourn in secret for them before

God—and carry their desperate case to the Lord night and day, by fervent and importunate prayer.

II. Offer to the consideration of the young, a few remarks, from which will appear the propriety of their coming to Christ.

Now, in the bloom of youth, in the morning of life, you enjoy the most precious and favourable opportunity of salvation. You have the fairest chance for eternal life of any other class of the human race. Your hearts are young and tender; they are susceptible of good impressions; they are not yet seared and hardened, by long habits of sin and wickedness: God's Spirit has not yet taken his final departure from you and given you up to hardness of heart, and reprobacy of mind: all the promises of the everlasting covenant, are open and free to you; yea, promises which older and rebellious sinners can never plead—can never claim.

Jesus comes as a suppliant to the door of your heart, and prays you by his groans and bloody sweat—by his torments and dying agonies—by all the joys of Heaven—by all the blessedness of the celestial Paradise,—to give him your hearts while young and tender—to honor him with the first fruits of your lives. Yea, the whole Trinity, God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost come, as suppliants; and court you with all the arguments which an infinite God can use, to fly from the wrath to come—to seek your salvation, and escape as for your lives, to the outstretched arm of a bleeding Jesus. *“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”*

My dear young friends, it is your best, your eternal interest, to forsake the ways of sin, seek salvation and come to Christ, now in the time of youth. Is it not your desire to be honorable and respectable? Then, come to Jesus by a genuine conversion—have Christ formed in your souls, the hope of glory—and this will raise you to honor and respectability in the eyes of all holy and happy beings—in the view of God, angels and redeemed saints. If you are hated and despised, it will only be by poor blinded and ungodly sinners—those who bear the image and likehess of the Old Serpent—those who possess the spirit and temper of the devil—those who hate God, Christ, and heaven, and love the way that lead to death and hell. Seek the Lord while he may be found, close the happy match with Jesus, and you shall be the sons of God.—The eternal uncreated I AM, the source of all perfection and blessedness, will own you as his children. Christ, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person—the Prince of the kings of the earth, will acknowledge you as his brethren—his kinsmen, and the dear bought travail of his soul. Your conversion and salvation will afford joy unspeakable to all the holy angels—and re-

deemed saints to the church militant, and triumphant---to the whole family of Christ in heaven and earth. Jesus will make you kings and priests to God, and you shall spend an eternity with him, in his Father's house, clad in robes of triumph with crowns of glory upon your heads. You shall be possessed of joys, such as "*eye hath not seen, nor ear heard--neither have entered into the heart of man.*" You love to be clothed in rich apparel, and adorned with the most beautiful ornaments. Then, come to Christ, and he will clothe you in his perfect righteousness.---When dressed in this robe, God himself will pronounce you beautiful and lovely---all fair, without spot or blemish. He will draw his image upon your hearts; and adorn you with all the graces of the divine spirit; so that like the king's daughter, you shall be all glorious within.

Would you be wealthy and opulent? then seek religion and come to Christ, and you shall have true riches which shall endure to eternity.---which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. You will be sons of God, "*And if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.*" All things shall be yours, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come,---all things shall be yours. When you shall have passed the dark valley of the shadow of death, you shall possess an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that never fadeth away---a kingdom that was prepared for you before the foundation of the world; and there you shall possess an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory.

Another consideration, we would offer to induce you to come to Christ is---While out of him, in an unconverted and careless state, you are in dreadful danger, although you are spiritually blind, and do not see it; spiritually dead, and do not feel it; and this renders your case more pitiable and distressing.

You are in unspeakable danger from the Old Serpent, who tempts you to sin and rebellion against God: he tempts you to postpone the work of repentance and salvation to some future period---to middle age, to old age, or a dying hour. He tells you that it would sink you into contempt and disgrace, and forever destroy your respectability in the world, if you were to have a serious look or shed a tear under a sermon; and that you would be ruined and undone, if you were to become the humble, praying, broken hearted followers of Jesus. He endeavors to persuade you, that there is no reality in religion---that regeneration and a sensible experience of religion, is all hypocrisy, enthusiasm, or foolishness---and that your highest glory is to be bold and open in his service---that it is only necessary that you observe what the world calls politeness and support the name of a good citizen.

While out of Christ, you are in exceeding great danger from your vain and sinful companions. They are every day leading you into idle conversation, vain amusements, and strong prejudices against God and religion; therefore, your hearts are every day growing harder and harder—your consciences more unfeeling and insensible. Every day, every hour, and every moment, you are out of Christ Jesus, you are exposed to the most awful danger of losing your day of grace, of being eternally given up of God to irrevocable damnation. The God of truth has said, "*My Spirit shall not always strive with man.*" Christ stands and knocks at his heart; but if it refuse to open and receive him, he will knock no more and depart forever. Ere long that dreadful sentence shall be passed, "*Let him alone!*" Then the state of the soul is truly worse than if it were already in hell.

While out of Christ, you are in unspeakable danger from *death*.

My dear young friends, you expect to live a great while in this world—you intend to enjoy a great deal of happiness in the pleasures of sin and in worldly amusements,---but you know not how long the sentence of the rich fool in the gospel, may be passed upon you: "*Thou fool this night shall thy soul be required of thee.*" You know not at what moment death, like a thief in the night, shall come and arraign you at the bar of an angry God.

Your danger is dreadful beyond conception while out of Christ, for all the perfections of God are engaged for your destruction. The wrath and curse of Jehovah hang over you like a tremendous cloud, just ready to burst in storms of Almighty vengeance upon your devoted heads. Hell, from beneath, yawns to receive you---the devils hover round about you gaping for their prey.

III. Speak of coming to Christ.

Here, by the help of the Divine Spirit, we will endeavor to display before you the glorious door of hope, which the everlasting love and compassion of God, has opened for sinners, such as you. You and I are invited—urged and entreated to come to Christ; and from this we may infer that there is *complete safety in Christ*. Yes, my young friends, Christ is a hiding place from the storms of God's vengeance—a strong tower---a city of refuge where complete safety is to be found.

Christ is *mighty to save*, and able even to the uttermost.

1st. Because he is the infinite and eternal God, as well as man. All the glorious attributes and perfections of the Godhead are essential in him, and therefore he is mighty to save.

2nd. Because he is the choice of the Eternal Wisdom—chosen and set apart in the eternal counsels of the Godhead before all worlds for this purpose—to redeem and save poor lost sinners.

3rd. By his resurrection from the dead---his ascension to glory---his exaltation at the right hand of God---and his all prevailing intercession he has demonstrated to the universe, that he has fulfilled the law, satisfied divine justice, and provided a perfect righteousness for all who believe on his name. Therefore he is mighty to save.

4th. Plain matters of fact prove that he is an all-sufficient Saviour. He has saved millions. Ask all the adoring hosts before the throne of God, redeemed from the earth, out of all nations, kindreds, and tongues, and people, how they came to the heavenly fields---to the blessed seats of the celestial Paradise, and they will tell you, that they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: they will declare that Christ is almighty to save. Inquire of every pardoned and justified believer upon earth, and they will tell you that they have beheld such a beauty, such a glory and all sufficiency in him, that if they had ten thousand souls, they should all be trusted upon him.

You are invited to come to Christ---and this implies that he is *willing to save you*. Of this he has given the most unquestionable proof. The High and Lofty One that inhabits eternity. He that is adored by angels and archangels, seraphim and cherubim, left the heaven of heavens, left the topless throne of his glory, and appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh---the God of joy---the source of all consolation---became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: he that is being itself---the fountain of all existence---the source of all perfection and blessedness---suffered ten thousand hells in one, and died upon the cross, to save just such sinners as you. Says the apostle, "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*" And he himself declares, that his kind errand into our world, was, "*to seek and to save that which was lost.*" His bloody sufferings---his excruciating tortures, and dying agonies, is an unquestionable proof of his willingness to save, the chief of sinners---even the worst of men and women. See him in the garden, crushed beneath the guilt of a lost world, groaning and crying, "*Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.*" See him dragged to Pilate's bar, bound and scourged, spat upon, and crowned with thorns. See him suspended on the cross, pierced with wounds, writhing in the agonies of death, and crying, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*"---And expiring, with a groan that shakes the universe---"*It is finished!*"

Every excruciating pain he felt, and every streaming wound, invites you to come; yea, every drop of divine blood, which run from his open wounds and breaking heart, calls upon you with

a voice louder than thunder, to fly for your lives and come to Christ.

When his wounds were open'd wide,
Justice cried, I'm satisfied.
In his pierced side there's room—
Every drop of blood cries come.

Suppose the bleeding, dying Jesus, were exhibited to you upon the cross to-day---all drenched in blood and tears---the blood flowing in scarlet streams from every gaping wound: were you to see him writhing in the agonies of death, and hearing him address you, O sinner, is this your hardness to your friend, must I endure all this for you---and yet will you not come to me that you may have life?

But it will appear that Christ is willing to save the chief of sinners, if we recollect, that after his resurrection, he makes the first offers of mercy to the sinners of Jerusalem, his blood thirsty murderers. He commands his apostles to go into all nations and preach the gospel, "*beginning at Jerusalem.*" "Go---go first to that bloody city, as their case is most desperate---as they are the chief of sinners---give them the first offer of mercy---tell them I was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel---if they will yet be gathered, I will be their shepherd.---Tell them that they despised my tears which I shed over them, and imprecated my blood to be upon them, that I shed both my tears, that I might soften their hearts towards God, and my blood that I might reconcile them to God. Tell them that I am alive again, and because I live, my death shall not be their damnation, nor my murder, their unpardonable sin---that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, even the sin by which it was shed.---Tell them you have seen the marks of the nails in my hands and feet, and the wound of the spear in my side---that those marks of their cruelty, so far from giving me vindictive thoughts against them, that every wound they have given me, speaks in their behalf, and pleads with the Father for the remission of their sins, and enables me to bestow it; nay, if you meet that poor unhappy wretch who run the spear into my side---tell him there is another way---a better way of coming to my heart---even my heart's love---if he will repent and look unto me whom he has pierced and mourn---I will cherish him in that very bosom he has wounded---he will find the blood he has shed, an ample atonement for the sin of shedding it. Tell him he will put me to more pain and displeasure by refusing this offer of my blood, than he did when he first drew it forth."

But who can doubt the willingness of Christ, that looks at the kind, gracious and benevolent offers of the gospel?

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.”
“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price.” “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “The Spirit and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and let him that is athirst, come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

But do you say, what must I do to come to Christ?

1st. Forsake every sin and sinful pleasure and propensity. *“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”*

2nd. Seek the Lord with all your heart and soul, in the use of all his appointed means, read and hear his word with praying hearts---read and hear as for eternity---pray and cry for mercy, as the condemned criminal for a pardon. You have the promise of a God for it.---“Seek and ye shall find.” “Seek ye me, and ye shall live.” “Seek the Lord thy God,” and “thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.”

3rd. Strive as for eternal life, to enter the strait gate of conversion: everlasting life is to be lost or won: heaven or hell, salvation or damnation, is dependant on the struggle.---“Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”

4th. You must persevere, in seeking, striving and struggling, as for life, until you meet with Jesus---till you view his glory with the eye of faith, and feel the witness of his pardoning love.

Coming to Christ, is the same as believing, receiving, looking, and flying to Christ. Would you come to him, you must pray and never faint---you must lie at the footstool of the Sovereign God, crying for mercy; and this must be your last resolve---I will go to Jesus, as a lost, condemned, hell deserving wretch.---If I perish, I will perish at his feet: if I am lost eternally---if I should go to hell at last, I will go from the feet of Jesus, crying for mercy.

Do you inquire for the evidences, by which you may know when you come to Christ.

1st. If you come to him, you will see by the eye of faith---by the eyes of your understanding, the unspeakable glory, beauty, and loveliness of the moral attributes of God, meeting and centering in Jesus.

2nd. You will see an exact suitableness in his two natures and offices; the burden of sin and guilt will be removed---the

spirit of bondage taken away,—and you shall receive the spirit of adoption in its place, by which you will be enabled to cry, *Abba Father.* You will deeply repent and humble yourself in the dust before the Lord.—“*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.—They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born.*” And when you have come to Christ, you shall have continual breathings after holiness—after likeness to God.

IV. We shall state concisely some of the advantages of obtaining an interest in Christ in the time of youth.

You will have a disposition to shun and avoid the snares of the Devil and the temptation of the world—you shall have true comfort in the present life—you will be delivered from the fear of death—and you shall have a glorious, happy, and blessed immortality.

SERMON XXXVII.



FUNERAL SERMON,

Occasioned by the death of Mrs. NANCY T. M'GREADY, who departed this life January 18th, 1809, in the 44th year of her age. By *James M'Gready*, V. D. M. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." REV. xiv. 13.

"Her flesh shall slumber in the ground,
'Till the last trumpet's joyful sound:
Then burst the grave with sweet surprise,
And in her Saviour's image rise.

Then she shall see, and hear, and know,
All she desired, or wished below;
And ev'ry pow'r find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy."



"*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.* JOHN xvii. 24.



OUR blessed Lord, was now just on the eve of finishing the work which the Father had given him to do---to complete man's redemption by the sacrifice of himself; and as he was soon to be removed, as to his bodily presence, from his dear disciples, he comforts and encourages their burdened and disconsolate hearts, by giving them many instructions, and soul refreshing promises, by which they may be cheered and supported to bear the dreadful difficulties, which awaited them. He then recommends them to God by a most solemn, efficacious, and prevalent prayer: one, which may with propriety be considered a short synopsis, of his all-prevailing intercession at the right hand of God.

In this prayer he pleads----

1st. For the sanctification of his people---that they may be kept from the evil which is the world---that they may be sanctified through the truth, and conformed to the divine nature.

2nd. He prays for the perfection of their union to himself---“That they may all be one as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one with us: and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one.”

3rd. And lastly, in the words of the text, he prays for their complete glorification, or the perfection of their eternal blessedness.---“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.”

Here we shall notice--

1st. The person praying---who offers his solemn and all-prevailing petition. He is the Great Immanuel--God with us---the woman’s promised seed who bruised the head of the Old Serpent---and will shortly bruise him under the feet of his most feeble followers: he is the Shiloh who was to come, and who did come, when the royal sceptre departed from Judah: the great prophet foretold by Moses to the church in the wilderness, whom the Lord their God should raise up to them, like unto himself: he is the “child born,” “the Son given,” who should be called “Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”---It is he whom Isaiah beheld, *“high and lifted up,”* his train filling the temple -- and the six winged seraphims crying one to another, saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”---It is the Eternal Word, that “was in the beginning with God,” and “was God,” by whom the heavens and the earth were created.—He is he “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;” who, “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”---It is he, who is “Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending,” “the first and the Last;” who shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, with all his holy angels, to judge the world in righteousness.---“The Ancient of days” whose “garment” is “white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool-- his throne” “like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire: a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him, thousand thousands” minister “unto him and ten thousand times ten thousand” stand “before him.” This is He who bears to a throne of grace the case of every justified believer, and pleads with the prayer hearing God for their complete and eternal blessedness. “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.”

Here is love that passeth all knowledge—love that is stronger than death—love, which all the mighty floods of Jehovah's wrath cannot drown—although he was just entering upon the scene of his bloody sufferings and dying agonies—although heaven earth and hell, were arrayed in battle against him—although the sins of the whole elect world, like so many deadly vipers, were just ready to seize him;—yea, although he was now in a few hours to endure in his soul and body what was equivalent to the pains and fiery torments of the damned—which all his ransomed millions would otherwise have endured, to all eternity in hell: yet such is the boundless love of the God-man, Christ Jesus, to the unworthy purchase of his blood, that he never forgets them—but presents them to his heavenly Father.—What an evident demonstration of his unparalleled love!—Though a woman should forget her sucking child—though she should have no compassion on the fruit of her womb,—yet he will not forget them; for he has their names not only enrolled in the book of life, but engraved on the palms of both his hands.

2nd. We will notice the persons for whom he prays, viz. Those whom the Father has given him.—“Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.” This expression, “*whom thou hast given me*,” is frequently used by our Lord to distinguish his spiritual children, from the world. “All the Father giveth me shall come to me.” “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me.”—“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.” From which we conclude, that those for whom he here prays, are the very persons whom God, the Father, gave Christ in the covenant of redemption, whom he undertook to redeem and save. They are the persons, whom God chose in Christ “before the foundation of the world,” that they should be “holy and without blame before him in love”—the persons whom he predestined to the adoption “by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will”—the persons whom God “predestinated, called, justified and glorified.”—In a word, every son and daughter of Adam, who ever have, or ever shall feel the pangs of the new birth—who have entered the strait gate of conversion;—yea, every pardoned, justified and sanctified believer whose name is written in the Lamb's book of life.

But do you desire to know whether you are the persons, for whom the Lord Jesus prays in his last, all-prevailing prayer before his sufferings began? If you are the persons you can prove your election or predestination, by your effectual calling and justification; and by the witness of the word and Spirit, you

can say with the apostle, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." If you are the persons interested in the all-prevailing prayer, you can prove your effectual calling, conversion and justification, by a progressive work of sanctification—by a life of holiness, self-denial, and communion with God;—for Christ prayed particularly for the sanctification, or deliverance of sin, of his people given him by the Father: and the apostle declares, that God, "hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world," for the very purpose, "that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

3rd. We will notice the subject matter of this prayer, viz. the glorification or complete eternal blessedness of all Christ's spiritual children.

The eternal blessedness of Christ's blood bought purchase, is exhibited in scripture by the strongest language and boldest metaphors which nature can afford; and yet the boldest figures fall infinitely short of its adequate description. Their residence in the heavenly paradise is termed a "*kingdom prepared*" for them "*from the foundation of the world*"—*The better country—the heavenly Canaan—the land of promise—the rest that remains for the people of God*. It is termed *the city of God—the paradise of God—the New Jerusalem*, whose walls are jasper and emerald, and other precious stones—its twelve gates solid pearl—its streets paved with pure transparent gold, with the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb, on either side of it; and in the midst of its streets the tree of life which bears twelve manner of fruits—and yields its fruit every month—whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. It is termed by Christ, *his Father's house*, in which are many mansions—the place which Christ has gone to prepare for them. It is termed an "*inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven*," for those who are said to be clothed in white, and walk with Christ. They are represented as wearing massy crowns on their heads, and as carrying palms of victory in their hands, singing the new song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty four thousand redeemed from the earth: shouting hallelujahs to God and the Lamb; crying with loud voices, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength—and honor and glory, and blessing;" "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests." They are represented as hungering and thirsting no more—as being freed from all sickness, and pain, and death—and as having all tears wiped away from their eyes. And it is said, that they have no more

night—that they have no more need of the light of the sun nor of the moon, for the glory of God enlightens them, and the Lamb is the light of the place. They are represented as having entered into the joy of their Lord—as possessing an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory—joys such as “eye hath not seen nor ear heard---neither have entered into the heart of man.”

But in the words of the text, the sum total of heaven and eternal blessedness, are expressed in two things, to wit, being with Christ, and beholding his glory.

These contain all that the eloquence of Gabriel could express, through infinite millions of ages. To be with Christ and to behold his glory:---

This, this, does heaven enough afford,
We are forever with the Lord;
We want no more, for all is given,
His presence is the heart of heaven.

To be with Christ and behold his glory, is ten thousand heavens in one.

Jesus, the heaven of heavens—he is
The soul of harmony and bliss;
And while on him we gaze,
And while his glorious voice we hear,
Our spirits are all eye, all ear,
And silence speaks his praise,

The doctrines contained in these words, are—

1st. That the eternal blessedness of every pardoned, justified believer, is as sure, and as absolutely certain as the existence of God.

2. That their glory and blessedness in the heavenly state, is unspeakable, incomprehensible, and indescribable. For the illustration of these doctrines, we shall

1st. Endeavor to prove that every pardoned, justified believer, shall be forever with Christ in heaven, and shall eternally behold his glory.

II. We shall consider the nature of that blessedness, which they shall enjoy, by being with Christ and beholding his glory; and

III. Apply the subject.

I. We are to attempt to prove that the eternal blessedness of every true believer is certain.

Such is the infinite extent of Christ's mediation and purchase, “that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” And so

it is, that death, through the penalty and curse of the law, is made an unspeakable blessing to the believer, by the death of Christ. He by dying, conquered death, and hath taken away his sting and curse, and it is now a kind friend, a messenger of peace, to bring, poor exiles home to their father's house and put them in possession of their heavenly "inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for them; yea, death places him in possession of "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—In a word, death brings them to experience the blessed consequences of Christ's prayer.—"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." The apostle John tells us, that he heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

What the old Patriarch Isaac said to Esau, concerning the benediction of Jacob, I "have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed," may very properly be applied to the dead who die in the Lord. They are blessed, yea, and they shall be blessed. They shall be eternally with Christ and shall behold his glory. The God-man, Christ Jesus, hath prayed for it, and the Father hath granted his prayer; and therefore it is infallibly certain.

But let us come to the point, and prove that every pardoned and justified believer, shall be ever with Christ and eternally behold his glory.

1st. It will appear evident, if we consider that Christ's prayer prevails with the Father, and cannot be refused. Or, in other words, when Christ prayed, his Father heard and answered him, granting his requests. This is indisputable; for the Amen and True Witness—the God who cannot lie—hath said that the Father always hears him. So you will see at the tomb of Lazarus, when he raised him from the dead: he said, " *Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hear- est me always.*" Now if the Father always hears Christ when he prays, he must have heard him and answered him when he prayed, " *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.*" And therefore, all his pardoned, justified followers shall be forever with him, eternally blessed and happy in beholding his glory.

2nd. Christ has actually prayed for it, and the Father hath heard his prayer and answered his petition; because the will of Christ, as God, and the will of the Father are the same: for he is God, equal with the Father, and possesses the same divine essence attributes and perfections.

Christ came into the world, sent of the Father, for the express purpose of redeeming and saving that which the Father had given him—those whom the Father had chosen "*in him before the foundation of the world, that*" they "*should be holy and with-*

out blame before him in love”—those whom he had predestinated to eternal glory, “according to the good pleasure of his will”—whom he designed effectually to call, justify and glorify:—and when Christ prays for these very persons, that they may be with him where he is, and that they may behold his glory,—can there be any doubt, that it is the Father’s will also? And if it is the Father’s will, who can doubt that they will be everlastingly with him, and be blessed in beholding his glory?

3rd. This is evident from the nature of Christ’s prayer: “*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.*”

Search all the records of eternity, and perhaps, there never was such a prayer as this presented to the court of heaven. When the poor, humble, penitent believer prays in faith, it is with the deepest submission to the sovereign will of God; when the man, Christ Jesus, prays in the garden of Gethsemane, it is with the humblest submission to his Father’s will—“Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.” But when he prays for the future glory and blessedness of his blood-bought followers, he pleads for it upon his merits—upon the principles of love and justice: “Father I will, that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.”—As if he had said, Father, I have purchased them with my blood—I have ransomed them with my dying agonies—I have fulfilled the law, and satisfied divine justice in their stead—I have wrought out an everlasting righteousness, by which, thou canst be made just in their pardon, justification, and eternal blessedness: I have given the most amiable and glorious display of the beauty and infinite excellency of all thine attributes, in their complete redemption and salvation;—therefore I plead for their happiness and eternal glory in the heavenly state upon the principles of Justice and equity—upon the footing of my almighty and all-sufficient merits, mediation and atonement. “I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.”

Here we may suppose he stands ready to answer every objection, which the law and justice of God can possibly raise against his plea. Are they by nature poor miserable sinners, completely lost and ruined by the fall? O, says Christ, my gracious and benevolent errand into the world, was in great mercy “to seek and to save that which was lost.” I saw them lying in their blood—and I said unto them even while weltering in their gore----Live! Are they by nature guilty sinners, condemned by the law—and as unable to work out a righteousness of their own, as to awake the dead? I am the incarnate God—God in human flesh----I have procured a righteousness, almighty and sufficient

for their justification—a righteousness as large and wide as the whole eternal law of God—a righteousness so pure, so excellent and glorious, that the all-penetrating eye of Jehovah cannot find in it the smallest fault or blemish. Are they polluted sinners, stained and defiled by sin in every part? Behold the immeasurable ocean of salvation, that bursts from my breaking heart—and flows from my pierced side. Here is blood to pardon—and water to wash them from the pollution of sin—and present them to God—without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. In short, I am made of God unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Then “who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

Thus, it is upon principles of justice, that Christ pleads, for their eternal glory and complete blessedness, and a holy and righteous God will grant his request; and therefore, every pardoned, justified believer, will be forever with Christ and shall ever behold his glory.

II. We are now to consider the nature of that blessedness, which the redeemed of the Lord shall enjoy by being with Christ and beholding his glory.

Were Gabriel to descend from his shinning seat in Paradise, and stand in this assembly, and exert his eloquence to its utmost bounds in attempting to describe the blessedness which the pardoned, justified soul enjoys in being with Christ and beholding his glory, he would only darken counsel by words without knowledge. Created language in making the attempt falters and staggers under its infinite weight and dreadful grandeur—and all that can be said is, that it contains an “exceeding and eternal weight of glory”—such as “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.”

John, the beloved disciple, who knew as much of Christ and heaven as ever man upon earth did, when he attempts to speak of it, can only say, “*Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*” When the united wisdom and eloquence of men and angels have said all that can be expressed upon the subject, the whole may be summed up in this: they are with Christ and they behold his glory.

But, to descend to particulars, in order to give some account of this blessedness, we would say,

1st. They shall be eternally freed from all sin—they shall be with Christ where he is; and where he is, no sin can come. “*And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth,*

neither worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

2nd. They shall be forever freed from the dangerous and deadly consequences of sin; for, being with Christ, nothing can enter to mar their happiness or interrupt their blessedness. The Divine Spirit says, that the inhabitants of that blessed country, shall no more say, I am sick—there shall be no more death—neither sorrow, nor crying; for “*God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*”

3rd. They shall be separated from the society and congregation of the wicked. In that blessed country, there is no Judas among the true disciples—no painted hypocrites—no self-deceived professors—to pollute the society of the blessed. There Christ’s redeemed children are freed forever, from the calumnies and bitter persecutions of the ungodly world—for where Christ is, they who die in their sins never can come.

4th. There they are forever freed from the rage, malice and subtle temptations of that Old Serpent, the Devil. They are with Christ, where he is, who hath destroyed the works of the wicked one—who hath bruised his head and will shortly tread him in the dust under the feet of his most feeble followers, and bring them off more than conquerors through the blood of the Lamb;—therefore, the Old Serpent cannot enter the gates of Paradise—he will never mar the peace or interrupt the enjoyment of Christ’s dear bought children, while eternity rolls its ample round. But, as they are with Christ, there will be no hard and unbelieving heart—no body of sin and death—no inbred corruptions—no pained hearts—no weeping eyes—no bitter sorrows—and no complaints under the frown of an absent God—no tears because of the hidings of Jesus’ lovely face; and for this reason—they are forever with Christ, and continually behold his glory. Now, consider, if one view of Christ’s personal beauty and glory, in this wretched and sinful world, will break the hardest heart and melt it into floods of penitential sorrow, and makes every sin appear odious and abominable—what will be the consequence, when they will be with Christ, where he is? When they shall see him face to face—without a dimming veil, or intervening cloud, through the ceaseless ages of eternity? When they shall eternally behold the meridian brightness of his glory? And feel the boundless, shoreless ocean of his love shed abroad in their hearts.

5th. As they are ever with Christ where he is, they shall be always like him—they shall bear his image—and shall be as much conformed to the divine nature, as it is possible for finite creatures to be. Like their God, they shall be perfect in holiness: one with Christ, as he is one with the Father. They shall bear the impression of all the moral attributes of God as far

as their capacities will admit. This seems to be what John intended, when he says, “*When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*” If their perishable bodies, which once in death lay covered with a ghastly paleness—that were consumed by worms—that mouldered to their native dust in the graves; if they shall spring from their dust, at the sound of the archangel’s trumpet, beautiful and immortal, formed and fashioned like the glorious body of Christ—O, how much more shall their souls, their deathless, their immortal and spiritual part, be transformed from glory to glory, into the image of Christ—into the fullest and most perfect conformity to the perfection of God!

Again let us consider.—If one faith’s view of the glory of God in the face of Jesus, in the hour of conversion, communicates spiritual and eternal life to the soul, completely “*dead in trespasses and sins*”—if it changes the soul that was black as hell, and deformed as the Devil, into the very image and likeness of Christ—and if the more of these sweet views of Christ, the poor believer enjoys, the more he becomes like Christ---and the more he is conformed to the divine nature,—what will be the blessed effect of an eternal and uninterrupted view of his glory, which every believer shall have in the Paradise of God—with Christ where he is? How shall they, through the boundless ages of eternity, be growing more and more like Christ, and be everlastingly advancing to a perfect union with him, when they shall eternally look upon his open face? Not darkly through a glass—not a transient view of him, in the ordinances of the gospel---not a view from Pisgah’s top, like that which Moses enjoyed of the promised land,---but an uninterrupted broad look upon all his glories and beauties. Then, indeed, shall we be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

6th. As they are with Christ where he is, they shall eternally enjoy the sweet company and blessed society of angels and archangels and spirits of just men made perfect. Christ tells them, “*In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also.*” And in the text---“*Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.*”

Where Christ is there is the place which the infinite, eternal, electing love of God, has designed for the habitation of all holy beings, of all glorious and blessed spirits. There their ears shall be forever regaled with the music of Gabriel’s songs; there they shall tune their golden harps, and sing the new song with the hundred and forty four thousand redeemed from the earth; there,

they shall join the shouts, the hosannahs, and loud hallujahs of angels, archangels, seraphim, and cherubim, and all the glorified millions, who continually cast down their glittering crowns before the eternal throne of God and the Lamb: there they shall enjoy the blessed conversation of all the redeemed millions, who ever have or ever shall enter the gates of the New Jerusalem through the blood of the Lamb,---there they shall see Adam and Eve, with all the saints of the antedeluvian ages; there they shall enjoy the sweet conversation of all the holy patriarchs, prophets and kings, who were redeemed and saved under the Old Testament dispensation; there they shall enjoy the blessed company of the apostles, and the hundreds and thousands, who were converted and saved in the primitive ages of the Christian church; there they shall meet with all the holy martyrs, who died for the cause of Christ, who shed their blood for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus; there they shall join the sweet society of the suffering Albigenses, who went to the realms of eternal blessedness from the most cruel torments.—

“From torturing pains, to endless joys
On fiery wheels they rode;
And strangely washed their raiment white
In Jesus’ dying blood.”

In short, they shall enjoy the blessed society of all the glorious, heavenly company, that exceeding great multitude, that no man can number, redeemed out of every, kindred and tongue, and people, and nation, upon the earth.

But O how sweet and heaven-like, will it be for the humble followers of Christ, to meet their dear brethren in that glorious world, from different lands, with whom they were conversant here below. The very persons with whom they have spent sweet days and nights upon the earth, in heavenly conversation and in spiritual prayer—with whom they sat in communion under the sweet sound of the gospel, and at the table of the Lord.

Now they meet in Immanuel’s land---in their Father’s house on high, never more to part through all eternity. When they met here on earthly ground, and enjoyed the sweet foretastes of heaven in their souls together, they had to part and sometimes part to meet again no more in this world; but now they meet in the Paradise of God---in the general assembly of the church of the first born in heaven---now they enjoy an eternal Sabbath---now the congregation ne’er breaks up---now they are with Christ, in the place which he has been preparing for them for more than eighteen hundred years, where they shall behold his glory, while eternity rolls its ample round.

7th. Being with Christ where he is, they dwell in perfect safety; they are in the hiding place, where the storms of divine vengeance can never reach them; they are in the ark of safety, where the floods of almighty wrath can never overwhelm them; they are in the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty: their place of defence is the munition of rocks; the name of their Lord is a Strong Tower, they are in it, and they are safe: they are ever with the Deity, surrounded by the Godhead shut up in the strong hold of the divine attributes.

8th. Being with Christ where he is, they therefore enjoy the immediate vision and full fruition of the Three-One-God; they enjoy unspeakable and uninterrupted fellowship and communion with God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost---and this is ten thousand heavens in one.

“There on a high majestic throne,
The Almighty Father reigns,
And sheds his glorious goodness down,
On all the blissful plains.

Bright, like a sun, the Saviour sits
And spreads eternal noon:
No evenings there, nor gloomy nights
To want the feeble moon.

Amidst those ever shining skies
Behold the sacred dove,
While banished sin, and sorrow flies
From all the realms of love.

The glorious tenants of the place
Stand burning round the throne,
And saints and seraphs sing and praise,
The infinite Three One.”

But, why do we dwell upon particulars, when the wisdom and eloquence of men and angels united, have expressed all that can be said in attempting to describe the glories of heaven and the blessedness of the celestial Paradise: the whole may be comprehended in these two things---*To be with Christ and to behold his glory.*” The poet expresses it.”

“To be with Christ and taste his love,
Is the full heaven enjoyed.”

They are with Christ where he is, and they behold his glory.

But where is Christ? He is in the highest heavens. The apostle tells us that “he ascended up far above all heavens.” Says John, “*And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having*

his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps; and they sung as it were a new song before the throne," which no man can learn, "but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."

But, again---Christ is in the Paradise of God. He is metaphorically styled "*the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.*" He is also in the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem; for, says the Divine Spirit, "*The city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*"

Then, if Christ's ransomed followers are with him where he is; they must be in the highest heavens---on the top of Mount Zion, tuning their harps, and singing the new song.---They must be with him in the Paradise of God, under the shadow of the tree of life, and feasted upon its richest fruits. They are with him also in the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God, where there is no more night; for his glory doth lighten it; yea, Christ Jesus is the light of the place.

But again, we would ask, where is Christ? He is in his Father's house of many mansions, preparing a home,---a blessed habitation in heaven for his children, where they may be with him, that they may behold his glory.

Then, since his followers are to be with him where he is, they shall be in the Father's house---in that place prepared for them by Christ where they shall behold his glory.

Again, where is Christ? He sits gloriously exalted at the right hand of the majesty on high. "*He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*" he "*is even at the right hand of God.*" Saith the apostle, and he "*also maketh intercession for us.*" "*Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*" He, "*being the brightness of his*" Father's "*glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*" Christ is also seated on his Father's throne, and saith he, "*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*"

Then if Christ's ransomed followers, are to be with him where he is; they shall be at the right hand of God, and shall sit with him on his throne, as he has sat with his Father upon his throne.

Where is Christ? Where he was from all eternity---in the bosom of his Father. "*No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath*

declared him." And if Christ is in the bosom of the Father, all his blood bought followers shall be in his bosom also; for where Christ is, they shall be, and there shall behold his glory.

We come now to speak of the most difficult part of the subject: to speak of the employment of the blessed inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, viz: *Beholding Christ's glory.* Were the tallest archangel to come down from the heaven of heavens—were Enoch who has near six thousand years experience of it, to descend from his shining seat—or a beloved John or glorified Paul,—I have no doubt, but they would tell us that created language is too feeble, too barren to express the ten thousandth part of the boundless glories and blessedness, of the heavenly state.

To see God, and to behold his glory, is, of all ideas, the most horrid to the wicked; for it implies the most inconceivable aggravation of misery. So, unhappy Balaam, when he speaks prophetically of the unspeakable glories of the Messiah, in the most pitiable language describes his own deplorable fate, "*I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh.*" And we are told, that the rich man in hell "*lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*" Afar off—away, beyond the impassable gulf. O what an aggravation of his torments!

But, seeing God—seeing Christ and beholding his glory,—when applied to the righteous, always includes the possession and enjoyment of the sum of blessedness. So our Lord says, "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*" Without holiness, "*no man,*" saith the apostle, "*shall see the Lord;*" which implies that the soul possessed of it, shall see and enjoy God as an infinite portion. Then, to be with Christ where he is, and behold his glory, implies—the essence and enjoyment of boundless, eternal and unspeakable blessedness. But what is Christ's glory? What is the glory of God? It is the aggregate of all the divine attributes—of all the infinitely amiable beauties and perfections of the Godhead.

Moses prayed, Lord, "*I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.*" The Lord granted his prayer and shewed him his glory—giving him a distinct view of his attributes, and the moral excellencies of his unbounded perfections. And the Lord said, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious, to whom I will be gracious; and will shew mercy, on whom I will shew mercy." "*Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live.*" "*Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock; and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover*

thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen." And when on Mount Sinai "the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, for giving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation."

The ransomed followers of Jesus, that are with Christ where he is, like Moses, they are in the cleft of the rock: but it is the wide cleft of the rock of ages,—the Rock which was cleft by the heavy strokes of almighty and inflexible justice, when the immeasurable scheme of salvation and eternal life, burst from the breaking heart of the dying Jesus. That which they enjoy is not a view of the back parts but an eternal broad sight, of all the ineffable beauties of his face. They are with Christ where he is, and they behold his glory in the brightness of its meridian splendor.

1st. All the sweet names or divine characters by which he manifested the glory and beauty of his attributes to them while here in this dreary wilderness, shall then be known and understood in all their glory and excellency, "I AM, THAT I AM"—which denotes eternal, self-existence---and the eternity and unchangeability of his essence. "JEHOVAH"—which represents his incontrollable sovereignty, his independence, his infinity, and his incomprehensible glory. "IMMANUEL"—God with us, or God in human flesh---which qualifies him to be the Redeemer and complete Saviour of poor, lost sinners; the central point on which all the attributes of God meet and agree, in the pardon, justification and eternal blessedness of guilty, hell-deserving rebels. And he is at the same time, the sweet medium through which a just and holy God, and pardoned rebels can meet and hold sweet communion and fellowship together. "Jesus," a Saviour from sin—"Christ," the anointed of the Father chosen and set apart for the express purpose of saving lost sinners.

O how sweet! how soul delighting! Yea, sweeter than the music of heaven, do these names often sound in the ears of pardoned and believing sinners, in this vale of tears, when they get near to God, and can by faith behold his glory in the face of Jesus. Then they can say in the language of the divine Spirit, "*The name of the Lord is a strong tower*"---"*an ointment poured forth*"---or as Elizabeth Rowe expresses it,---

“Sweet name in thy each syllable
A thousand bless’d Arabias dwell:
Mountains of myrrh and beds of spices,
And ten thousand Paradises.”

What then must be the glory and unutterable beauty, which will appear forever unveiled in each of these names, to all the ransomed millions that be with Christ where he is! How will all his glorious characters sound upon their golden harps, fill their loud songs of praise, and communicate ten thousand joys to their souls.

2nd. The children of Christ, as they will be with him where he is beholding his glory, will no doubt have the most complete and perfect knowledge of all the mysterious works of God, in creation and providence. A knowledge of the infinite beauty and glory, and perfection of the divine attributes, will be exhibited in the works and ways of God to man—and the soul will be wrapped in contemplation of the goodness, justice, and mercy of the Great Eternal. And as the happiness of the heavenly state will be so complete, that no species of knowledge, no degree of enjoyment, can be wanting to consummate the blessedness of the glorified saints above, we may with propriety suppose, that their capacities will be so expanded, and their knowledge so extended, that the most feeble member of the church triumphant above—the weakest infant or the most illiterate man or woman who has entered the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem, through the blood and atonement of Christ, will be able to comprehend all the laws and phenomena of the natural world, far beyond the deepest researches, and investigations of the most accomplished philosophers of the earth and will as far outstrip them in knowledge, as Newton does the illiterate peasant.

3rd. As they are with Christ where he is, beholding his glory, contemplating the infinite beauty and excellence of the divine attributes, no doubt but the mysterious wonders of Providence, since creation, with regard to the church of God, and with regard to every individual Christian who has been pardoned and justified through the blood of Christ, and prepared by his Spirit for the enjoyment of the Celestial Paradise, will afford through the ceaseless ages of eternity, the most astonishing exhibitions of the divine glory.

The providence of God with respect to the church from the creation of the world to the consummation of all things, when every elect soul is gathered home—when the glorious plan of redemption is closed—and all Jehovah’s eternal designs of mercy are completed—will doubtless exhibit the most astonishing system which ever adoring worlds beheld.

Earth and hell, men and devils, have combined for the destruction of the church from age to age since time began—yet it is like the burning bush, which Moses saw always in the flames, but never consumed. The rage and fury of devils is so overruled by infinite wisdom, that all things in the event turn out for the prosperity of Christ's mediatorial kingdom. Though the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vein thing---though the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed---although the world is overturned by a Nebuchadnezzar, a Cyrus, and an Alexander, yet all things go directly forward in the purpose of God for the salvation of the church. The Jews and Romans combine, and crucify the Son of God; but all they accomplish by this act of wickedness, was the destruction of the Devil's empire, and the salvation of a lost world. Though the Roman Empire, by ten successive persecutions, attempts the final destruction of the church, yet it must be acknowledged, that the blood of the martyrs, is the seed of the church; for the more they are slaughtered, the more do their numbers increase. In a word, all the events of time, the revolutions of nations, and the rise and fall of empires, have been and will yet be, directed to the accomplishment of God's eternal purposes of wisdom, love and mercy to his church.

When this heaven astonishing system is unveiled in the Paradise of God to all the humble followers of Jesus, who are with Christ where he is and beholding his glory, what new wonders and unfathomable glories must, through eternity, strike their adoring eyes, and fill their hearts with joy praise and adoration!

But again—In this grand system of Providence to the church, with respect to every pardoned, justified believer, who ever has or ever shall enter the New Jerusalem, there are so many distinct mysteries and Godlike systems of Providence—and in all these systems are exhibited so many mysterious designs of infinite wisdom—all the purposes of God's everlasting love, and all his gracious designs in all their afflictions, trials and tribulations, in fitting and preparing their souls for eternal glory,—will be unveiled and laid open to the people of God, when they are with Christ and beholding his glory. Then they shall perfectly understand the reasons why the Lord led them in a way which they knew not---then shall they know how all things worked together for their good---how all their losses, afflictions, woes and sorrows, were prepared and directed by unerring wisdom, to fit them as so many vessels of mercy to be filled and to overflow with inexpressible delight---there they will acknowledge, that there was not one painful dispensation of Providence, which they could have done without.

4th. In the glorious work of redemption, they shall have the brightest and most unparallelled exhibition of the divine glory. Here God, in the person of his Son, has outdone, all his mightiest works. Here adoring angels and archangels are represented as stooping down, with outstretched necks, and desiring to look into the indescribable wonders which it contains. Here the redeemed millions, whilst they enjoy the most perfect and complete view of the infinite beauties and glories that shine in the lovely face of Immanuel—while they stand and gaze, and wonder, and adore, beholding the immeasurable height and depth, and length and breadth of the boundless love of God in Christ Jesus—that love which is as long as eternity—higher than the highest heavens—deep as the helpless misery and wretchedness of our nature—and broad and boundless as the Being, essence and attributes of God,—are overwhelmed and lost in an infinite ocean of blessedness. And whilst they cast their glittering crowns before the throne, they sink into nothing before the Eternal All.

The more his glories strike their eyes,
The humbler they must lie;
Thus, while they sink, their joy must rise
Inmeasurably high.

5th. But to close the subject: Christ's blood-bought followers must be forever blessed. They shall be eternally with him where he is, and forever behold his glory. And what must the blessed consequence be? To what must their blessedness arrive at last? Surely none can tell. Neither men, or angels can describe how holy, how happy, how nearly like God they will become at last. As we have already observed, one faith's view of the glory of God in Christ, communicates spiritual and eternal life to the soul that is "*dead in trespasses and sins*"—changes the sinner black as hell, and as deformed as the Devil, from glory to glory, into the image of God; and the more of these views the believing soul enjoys, the more he is like Christ. Well, what will be the effect, to behold the meridian brightness of his glory without a dimming veil between, or an intervening cloud, throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity?

The human mind is capable of endless improvement. A child put to school in his alphabet, to continue for thirty years, will drink in all the scientific knowledge of the schools. According to his application, his mind expands and his knowledge increases, until he becomes the wonder of his fellow men. Then, what must be the improvement of holy, happy beings in Paradise? What must be their knowledge of God, and their likeness to him at last, when they are eternally with Christ where he is, and beholding his glory—constantly discovering new wonders in the unsathionable glories of the Godhead—their capacities eternally expanding, while their knowledge of God and their views of the

divine glories are increasing and daily becoming brighter? Certainly, they must be through all eternity approaching nearer to a oneness with God.

III. We are now to make some application of the subject.

From what has been said, we infer, that death is an unspeakable blessing to those who die in the Lord; yea, the Spirit of God hath declared, "*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.*" During their stay in this howling wilderness—in this wretched abode of misery, pardoned and justified souls, are far from their God—they feel themselves strangers and pilgrims in this world; but when death comes, they view themselves, as just going to the rest that remains for the people of God—just going to take possession of that kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the world—of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that never fades away.

Death from all death has set them free,
And will their gain forever be:
Death loosed the massy chains of woe,
To let the mournful captives go.

Death is to them a sweet repose,
The bud was oped to show the rose:
The cage is broke to let them fly,
And build their happy nest on high.

Lo, there they do triumphant reign,
And joyful sing in lofty strain;
Lo, there they rest, and love to be,
Enjoying more than faith can see.

The thousandth part they now behold,
By mortal tongues was never told:
They got a taste—but now above
They forage in the fields of love.

What, though their pale and ghastly bodies must lie and moulder in the grave, and though after their skin, the worms shall destroy their bodies; yet in their flesh they shall see God; for the Spirit hath spoken it—" *Them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*" Yes, the same bodies which were laid in the graves, shall spring from their dusty tombs at the sound of the archangel's trumpet, beautiful, formed and fashioned like Christ's glorious body. They shall hear the Almighty Jesus, the eternal Judge of quick and dead, from his great white throne of fiery flame, pronounce the joyful sentence—" *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*" They shall go home with Christ to his Father's house: there they shall be ever with Christ where he is—and to all eternity shall behold his glory.

Why should we mourn departed friends,
Or shake at death's alarms?
'Tis but the voice that Jesus sends,
To call them to his arms.

Why should we tremble to convey
Their bodies to the tomb?
There the dear flesh of Jesus lay,
And left a long perfume.

The graves of all the saints he blessed,
And softened every bed.
Where should the dying members rest,
But with their dying head?

2d. From what has been said we infer, the final perseverance of the saints—the absolute impossibility of any of Christ's blood-bought children ever falling from grace into a state of condemnation. Christ's last prayer assures them of complete redemption. The divine Spirit tells us, that "*whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*"

The power of an infinite God must fail, it must be defeated by a superior power, which is impossible, before his eternal designs of mercy can be disappointed. He it is who hath said—"All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me;" "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand; my Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." And upon the principles of law and justice, he prays for their complete glorification; and the Father hath heard and answered him; and therefore their eternal blessedness is certain.

3d. From this subject we may infer, the unspeakable misery and inconceivable horror, and dreadful torment, that await the finally impenitent sinner: those that die out of Christ—who have no interest in his merits and atonement—who have rejected the last offers of mercy, and despised the only plan of salvation which infinite goodness has provided. They have "*trodden under foot the Son of God,*" and have "*counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith*" they were "*sanctified, an unholy thing,*" and have "*done despite unto the Spirit of grace:*" and the truth of God is engaged for their everlasting destruction—and all the attributes of God are pledged to banish them from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. Therefore, where God and his Christ are they never can come.

"My thoughts on awful subjects roll,
Damnation and the dead:
What horrors seize the guilty soul
Upon a dying bed!"

Ling'ring about these mortal shores,
 She makes a long delay;
 Till, like a flood with rapid force,
 Death sweeps the wretch away.

Then, swift and dreadful she descends
 Down to the fiery coast,
 Amongst abominable fiends—
 Herself a frightful ghost.

There endless crowds of sinners lie,
 And darkness makes their chains;
 Tortur'd with keen despair, they cry,
 Yet wait for fiercer pains.

Not all their anguish and their blood
 For their own guilt atones,
 Nor the compassion of a God
 Shall hearken to their groans."

4th. This subject we may improve for the comfort and consolation of all Christ's humble followers upon earth, who have entered the strait gate of conversion, and are walking the narrow way to Immanuel's land.

You are bound for Canaan—you are travelling home to God—you are in your journey to your Father's house. Is your way thorny and difficult? Have you to wrestle with principalities and powers, and fight your way to heaven inch by inch? Are your crosses, afflictions and trials, almost intolerable? Well, my dear friends, your heavenly Father knows what is best for you. You must be hewed and polished before you are fit for the heavenly building. The vessels of mercy must be rubbed and brightened before they will be fit furniture for the Father's house, or before you are qualified to be filled with eternal and never fading glory. Rejoice, for your trying time is short—you will soon be at the end of your race—you will soon be at home in your heavenly Father's house—and one moment with Christ where he is, beholding his glory, will make you forget all the years of your weeping and mourning. But do you say your case is a singular one; that the Lord has dealt hardly with you; a beloved husband, or darling wife, or sweet smiling babe has been snatched away by death, from your fond embrace?

However trying this may be to fond nature, yet remember it is your Father's will. Be still and know that he is God. Have you a comfortable hope for your dear departed friend? Then, consider your loss as their unspeakable gain.—If they are with Christ, their situation is ten thousand times preferable to what it was with you. Christ is finishing the place which he has been preparing for his blood bought family. He is bringing the vessels of mercy home, just when he has them prepared; and O,

will not heaven be still the sweeter to you, when your dearest part is gone there before you!

5th. From what has been said, let me entreat you often to walk up to the banks of Jordon; often to have Christ the hope of immortal glory in your souls; often converse with death; often take a Pisgah's view of the heavenly Paradise, keep your souls habitually comfortable and happy: and when you die, you shall be with Christ where he is, and shall forever behold his glory.

“On Jordon’s stormy banks, I stand
 And cast a wishful eye
 To Canaan’s fair and happy land,
 Where my possessions lie.
 O, the transporting, rapturous scene,
 That rises to my sight!
 Sweet fields arrayed in living green
 And rivers of delight.

There generous fruits that never fail
 On trees immortal grow;
 There rocks, and hills, and brooks, and vales,
 With milk and honey flow.
 All o'er those wide extended plains,
 Shines one eternal day:
 There God, the Son, forever reigns,
 And scatters night away.

No chilling winds, nor pois’nous breath,
 Can reach that healthful shore;
 Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
 Are felt and feared no more.
 When shall I reach that happy place
 And be forever blessed?
 When shall I see my Father’s face
 And in his bosom rest?

Filled with delight, my rapturous soul
 Can here no longer stay;
 Though Jordon’s waves around me roll,
 Fearless I’d launch away,
 There, on those high and flow’ry plains,
 My spirit ne’er shall tire;
 But in perpetual, heavenly strains,
 Redeeming love admire.”

SERMON XXXVIII.

FAST DAY SERMON,

PREACHED DURING THE LATE WAR WITH ENGLAND.

“Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders, and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord.” JOEL i. 14.

If we will glance over the history of the Church in all ages of the world, we will discover that fasting and prayer have been the means to which the people of God have resorted, that they might cast themselves upon his protection, and obtain from his Omnipotent Arm deliverance in times of public judgments, and of great national calamity.

When Joel prophesied, the fearful calamities and terrible judgments of an offended God were just ready to fall upon the Jewish nation, and threatened nothing less than inevitable destruction. But in the words of the text, the prophet directs them to means, the most rational and the most likely, by which they might avert the impending stroke. This was to cast themselves upon the mercy of God, by solemn fasting and importunate prayer. *“Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord.”*

The duty enjoined, is comprised in several parts conjointly. 1st. *“Sanctify ye a fast.”*---That is, appoint a fast---set apart a day for that purpose. Observe it with humility, with solemnity and sincerity.---By abstaining from the lawful comforts of life, you will see your entire dependence upon God as his creatures.

2nd. *“Call a solemn assembly.”* On this day of fasting and humiliation, let the people be collected together, and unite their prayers and supplications before a merciful, prayer hearing God.

3rd. Let this solemn assembly be composed of all classes and characters, who are in need of divine mercy and divine blessings. *“Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land.”*

In the present day the word elders signifies, generally, the officers of the church; but in early ages, in the Old Testament dispensation, and in our text, it signifies the leading characters of the nation both in church and state: it signifies all civil, military and ecclesiastical officers. Let all such, with all the inhabitants of the land, assemble together, to fast and humble themselves before God.

4th. Let them meet in the house of the Lord their God. Among the Jews the house of the Lord, the place of meeting for prayer and humiliation, was the Temple. In the gospel day, it is any and every place appointed for divine worship.

5th. We have the important purpose of this meeting together for fasting, prayer and humiliation before God. "*Cry unto the Lord;*" call upon his holy name, in importunate prayer, for pardon, for help and deliverance. Viewing the situation of our country at the present time, involved in a war with a powerful, treacherous and bloody enemy---our frontiers exposed to the ravages of their murdering allies, the blood thirsty savages of the forest---and at the present moment, when an army of brave men has been betrayed into the hands of our enemy by a traitor, by which, thousands of innocent females and helpless infants are exposed to the tomahawk and scalping knife of the united bands of British and Indians,---it surely is a period when he should sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, and cry mightily to God for help and deliverance.

Thousands of brave, patriotic citizens, have left their homes, their wives, their children and all that is dear to them, to stand upon the bloody field, to fight the battles of their injured country, to purchase liberty and independence, for their offspring with their blood. And are we not bound by every endearing tie and solemn obligation, to fast, and pray, and cry mightily to God, for their protection, for their success, for their return to their families and friends crowned with victory and triumph.

In further attending to this subject, we shall---

I. Attempt to shew the propriety of a nation, the church of Christ, Christian families and individuals, uniting as one man in fasting, praying, and crying to God for the deliverance of their country in times of great national distress and calamity.

II. Show from examples and the promises of scripture, the encouragement God has given his people, to seek for help and deliverance by fasting and prayer.

III. Mention a few things necessary to perform this national duty in a manner acceptable to God.

I. We are to attempt to show the propriety of a nation, the Church of Christ, Christian families, and individuals, meeting as one man in fasting, praying and crying to God for the deliver-

ance of their country in times of great national distress and calamity.

By meeting together in importunate prayer and fasting in times of war and other public calamities, the nation is brought into effective measures, to obtain the common deliverance.

The body politic like the human body, is composed of many members, all useful in their respective stations, and conduce to the general good, in the same manner as the eye, the ear, the hand, and the feet contribute to the welfare of the body.

At the present crisis, there are thousands who cannot turn out like heroic volunteers, to fight the battles of their country. Aged fathers in the decline of life, are inadequate to the task—the tender females are by nature disqualified for it; yet they can do as much for the salvation of the country as the bold and undaunted soldier. By fasting and prayer, they can draw down the blessings of heaven upon their fellow citizens who have gone forth to battle; by the prayer of faith they can plead with a prayer hearing God, to extend his protecting care over them; by the prayer of faith they can ask for the wisdom of God to direct all the military operations and crown them with success, with victory, and final deliverance of their country and God has assured us that if they ask these things in the name of Jesus, he will hear them and grant them a gracious answer to their prayers.—And when the prayer hearing God appears for our deliverance, when the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel goes forth with our armies, victory and triumph are the sure consequences. Therefore the aged christian, tottering on the brink of the grave, and the timid female, by faithful prayer, may be as profitable to their country in war, as the undaunted hero amid the storm of battle. Says Samuel Rutherford, an eminent old Scottish divine, in one of his sermons, “The most obscure female who has an interest in Christ, can effect more by the prayer of faith, than a general with an hundred thousand men; for, by one act of faith she can set all the wheels of God’s Omnipotence to work.”

Fasting, praying and crying to the Lord for help and deliverance, is one of the most rational exercises, in which intelligent creatures can be engaged. How reasonable, for a child in distress to fly to its parent for protection: how proper, for feeble creatures, to cry for help from an infinite God, their common parent, their Creator, their preserver and kind benefactor. The grand design of heaven in instituting ordinances, was to bring God’s intelligent creatures, to feel their dependence upon him—to know that all help and all deliverance, every blessing and every comfort they need, must come from his hand. The indiginity of sin consists in a want of reliance on God. The sinner declares his independence—he invades the prerogative of the

Almighty—and sets himself up in place of God. Thus, he exposes himself to the displeasure of God in this world, and to the vengeance of eternal fire in that which is to come. But, by deep humiliation, fasting and earnest prayer to God, mankind are brought to feel their dependence on him. There they seek help where it is to be found; they go to him for deliverence, who is almighty, infinite and all-sufficient; and he who measures the ocean in the hollow of his hand, who comprehends the dust of the earth in a balance, who weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance, and takes up the isles as a very little thing----is able to be a Deliverer and an Almighty friend in cases the most desperate.

Therefore when our country is attacked by blood thirsty and murdering enemies----when the alarm of bloodshed, slaughter, and war sounds on every hand,---let us with humility, with humble prayer and genuine sincerity, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, and cry mightily to God for help and deliverence.

The scripture furnishes us with a variety of plain facts, in which nations, and individuals, in war and other public calamities have, by solemn fasting, and prayer cried to God for assistance, and the Lord who ever hears the cries of the wretched, has heard them, answered their prayers, and granted them deliverance.

When the camp of Israel had offended God, by the accursed thing concealed by Achan, and were put to flight before their enemies, Joshua and the people of God, by fasting, prayer, and earnest supplication at a throne of grace, spread their case before the Lord, and cried mightily to him for pardon and salvation. He heard them, and when the accursed thing was removed, he crowned them with victory and success and dispersed their enemies before them.

When Ahab king of Israel, though a wicked man, was terrified at the dreadful judgments of God, which were threatened against him, and fasted and prayed and humbled himself before God, the Lord declared to his prophet, that he would not bring those great evils upon Ahab in his day.

When the Jews in the Persian Empire through the murderous intrigue of Haman, were devoted to destruction, they fasted, and prayed, and cried mightily to God, and cast themselves upon his mercy—he graciously heard them and sent them a glorious deliverance.

Jehosaphat king of Judah, was beset by innumerable and confident armies, and his country threatened with ruin. But when by solemn fasting and prayer, he cast himself upon divine protection, his enemies are dismayed, confounded, thrown into confusion, and effect their own destruction.

When the Ninevites were allarmed at the dreadful judgments denounced by the preaching of Jonah, they proclaimed a fast—they observed it with all possible strictness—and besought the Lord vehemently for mercy; and what was the consequence? Deliverance comes—the stroke of God's avenging rod is averted.

II. Shew from examples and the promises of scripture, the encouragement which God has given his people, to seek help from him by fasting and prayer.

And in general terms we would say, that the testimony of God's precious word, from beginning to end, clearly shows, that all who seek deliverance at his hand, are sure to find it. There is not an example in the whole book of God, either of a nation or individual, who has cried to the Lord in the time of trouble, with a fervent prayer and a sincere heart, that was ever rejected or disappointed. The examples already stated sufficiently prove this pleasing truth. The case of Jehosaphat when attacked by the invincible force of armies elated with conquest, is an undeniable proof. He cries to the Lord by fasting and prayer—he enters the field praising God, with a firm reliance on the Almighty; and the Lord gives him victory and triumph, while ruin and destruction seize his enemies.

King Asa was attacked by an army of a million of men, with the strongest military preparations; but when he casts himself and his country upon the protection of his God, when he encounters the host with an humble dependence upon the arm of Omnipotence, crying to God, "*In thy name we go against this multitude,*" the Lord appears for his deliverance and puts all his enemies to flight.

When Hezekiah was attacked by the mighty host of the Assyrians, who bade defiance to God himself, he and Isaiah, and probably all the pious Jews, go to the house of God, and by earnest and importunate prayer, they lay their case before the Lord; and what is the consequence? The Lord God of Israel appears to deliver them. By an extraordinary stroke of his power, Sennacherib's mighty army is laid dead upon the field. Oh what encouragement for America to trust in God, and fast and pray, and commit her armies in all their movements to the care of the Omnipotent Jehovah!

But again, let praying christians never fear—let them cry to the Lord: Jehovah is a prayer hearing God. Joshua by the prayer of faith inverts the established laws of nature, and stops the sun and moon in their courses. Elijah by faithful prayer shuts the heavens, and no rain falls upon the earth. Again he prays, and the havens are opened and the rain refreshes the earth.

But, look at the gracious promises also, which the Lord has made to them who pray in faith.—“*Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full.*” “*And whatsoever ye ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*” “*What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*”

We are met together to day; a solemn fast has been appointed; a praying assembly is collected to cry unto the Lord; and what are our petitions? for what are we this day to pray?

We are called this day to supplicate the throne of grace, and cry mightily to the Lord for the salvation of our bleeding country—for deliverance from impending danger—and for success and victory upon our brave troops, who have gone to risk their lives for the defence of liberty, and fight the battles of their country. It is our duty as free citizens of a favoured Republic, to cry to the Lord, and plead in the name of Jesus that the Lord JEHOVAH by his unerring wisdom, would preside in the grand councils of our nation; that he would direct our public characters, and order all their determinations, so as to accomplish the great purposes of his glory; that he would terminate the present contest in the deliverance of the nation; and that he would advance the prosperity of his church and kingdom in the world.

It is our duty this day to remember importunately at a throne of grace, the distressed state of our helpless frontier settlements, which are exposed to the unrelenting fury of the bloody savages of the desert, and to their murdering allies the British, who are prompting and aiding them to imbrue their cruel hands in the blood of innocent women and helpless babes. It is our duty in a particular manner, to remember our brave volunteer troops whom God has stirred with a bold patriotic spirit, to go forth to redeem their country at the expense of their blood. The principles of humanity, friendship, gratitude and brotherly affection, prompt every true American, every lover of mankind, and every lover of Jesus, to carry their case to God; to cry mightily to the Lord, and plead with him to preserve and protect them, through all the dangers and difficulties of the present expedition to shield and defend them on the field of battle to crown them with success and victory; and return them again to be a comfort and a blessing to their friends and their families. O let us remember them with the affection of brothers—our flesh and the partners of our lives:—and since we can do no more for those, who are doing and suffering so much for us, let us help, and assist them with our most fervent and importunate prayers and entreaties at the throne of grace.

III. Shew how this national duty must be performed to be acceptable to God

1st. Let us unite in heart and mind, like Americans, like brethren, like christians, in the great common cause of our country, let all the distinctions and differences in politics which have heretofore existed, be lost and forgotten; and, like freemen and christians let us rally round the standard of our nation.

The bloody savages who are now murdering tender mothers and infants on our frontier—the throne of Britain, which hires and pays them for this bloody work—and the regular troops who are sure to assist and protect them in these cruel murders—are the common enemies of our country—the common enemies of humanity, and of God himself. Let no American, let no lover of mankind or his country, plead the case of blood thirsty monsters in human shape. No. Let us all with one heart and one mind cry to the Lord to go forth with our armies—to tread down our enemies—and bring salvation and deliverance to our country.

2nd. That we may perform this great national duty to divine acceptance, let each of us, for himself, reform his life in every thing contrary to the nature and will of God; let us repent and forsake every sin; let each one of us try, for himself to have every guilty cause removed, that might provoke the Lord to pour out his judgments upon us, or permit our enemies to prevail against us. If we will lie in the dust before him like returning prodigals—like humble penitents—the scriptures declare, yea, the very language of the Lord is, "*Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you.*" "*Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you.*"

3rd. To perform this duty acceptably, let us try to be christians in reality—to have the knowledge of God and his son Jesus Christ, which is eternal life—that faith which beholds the divine glory in the face of Jesus—that faith which feeds and lives upon Christ the bread of life, which came down from heaven. Then we will be able to come to God in Christ, as children to a father—then we will be able to wrestle with God in prayer like Jacob, and prevail like Israel.

SERMON XXXIX.



THE BELIEVER'S ESPOUSAL TO CHRIST.



“Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.” JEREMIAH ii, 2.



THE first chapter of the prophecy of Jeremiah, contains his call and commission as a prophet. This is the introduction of the first solemn message from the Lord to the Jews, his once beloved, but now backsliden people. In this chapter the Lord contrasts *the kindness of their youth, the love of their espousals, when they went after him in the wilderness*—when “*Israel was holiness to the Lord and the first fruits of his increase*,” with their unnatural rebellion, base apostacy and whorish idolatry; and it points out, in the most striking language their brutish ingratitude. “*Thus saith the Lord, What iniquities have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?*” Why have they gone after strange gods and their vain imaginations, notwithstanding the great things which the Lord has done for them—in their redemption from the heavy yoke of Egyptian bondage—in their deliverance at the Red Sea—the tender care and protection he extended to them in the wilderness—and in putting them in possession of the promised Canaan—a land flowing with milk and honey.

He then represents their rebellion and ingratitude as without parallel, even among the heathen nations of Greece and Italy—the unenlightened idolators of the Isles—the wandering tribe of the Arabian deserts. No such examples of irrational conduct could be found. “*Pass over the isles of Chittim and see; and send unto Kedan, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory, for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens at this, and be horribly*

afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken eisterns that can hold no water." Again, he says, "*Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number.*"

By the kindness of their youth, and the love of their espousals, when they went after him in the wilderness, he refers particularly to the time of their deliverance at the Red Sea, when they were completely liberated from Pharoah and Egyptian bondage—when they saw all their enemies lost beneath the waves—when the Lord guarded them in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night—when he fed them on manna descending from heaven, and refreshed them with pure water breaking from the rock.

Then the Lord espoused them to himself as his peculiar people, set apart from all the nations of the earth. Then they sang his praises and adored his name.

The deliverance of the Israelites at the Red Sea, and their happy escape from Pharoah and the Egyptians, is a lively figure of the sinner's conversion to God. When the arm of Jesus plucks him as a brand from the burning—draws him from the horrible pit and miry clay—and rescues him from the jaws of the roaring lion of hell. The day of the sinner's conversion is the time of the soul's espousal to Christ; a day of joy in heaven and earth; a day of joy to the Lord Jesus, for then *he sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied*. He then forgets his groans and bloody sweat in the garden, and Mount Calvary's dreadful scene of wounds, blood and death, and sees the attributes of God shining with glorious lustre in the salvation of the purchase of his blood. It is a day of unspeakable joy to all the heavenly hosts. Angels and archangels, seraphim and cherubim, and the spirits of the just made perfect, tune their harps anew, to notes of sweetest music, when they see a sinner born to God. *I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.* It is a day of joy to the ministers of Christ, who are for the most part sorrowful and heart-broken on account of the hardness and impenitence of sinners' hearts; but in their conversion, they are more than paid for their works of faith and labors of love. It is a day of great joy to all God's people; it brings heaven down to earth, and gives them a new start for glory; for by this they know that God hears and answers prayer; that he is faithful to all his promises; but last of all, it is a day of great and unspeakable joy to the pardoned soul; because he has escaped the jaws of the Devil, and the flames of an eternal hell. Songs of praise and gratitude employ his tongue, and he rejoices indeed with exceeding great joy.

Again, the joy, gratitude, and love of God's ancient people, their songs of praise, and music, and dancing, when rescued from their enemies, beautifully represent the new life, the heavenly peace, and comfort, and unutterable delight of young converts in the service of God in the duties and ordinances of his house, when they feel the witness of Jehovah's pardoning love in the soul, and taste the sweet free libations of heavenly joys. These are the effects consequent upon his happy deliverance, and the secret knowledge of the beauty and preciousness of Christ.

But alas! the shameful backsliding, base ingratitude, and idolatry of the Jews notwithstanding all the Lord had done for them, is very emblematical of the backslidding, ingratitude and carnality of many who, in these days, profess to feel the pardoning love of God.

The words of the text, and the occasion upon which they were spoken naturally lead to the following reflections, viz: First, that the displays of the almighty power and unparalleled love of God to the sinner, in the day of conversion, is cause of unspeakable joy, gratitude, and love. Second, that the sins and backslidings of those who have tasted the pardoning love of God, are more provoking, more deeply wound the Lord Jesus, than the sins of any other class of men; since they crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

In the further discussion of this subject, we shall speak—

I. Of the soul's espousal to Christ.

II. Of the consequences of such espousal.

III. Show some of the marks and consequences of backsliding,

I. Speak of the soul's espousel to Christ.

The word espousal is expressive of marriage and all the accompanying circumstances and solemnities. Here it is applied to the union of the soul to Christ in conversion, and with propriety too, inasmuch as the marriage covenant and the mutual love peculiar to the married state, are frequently used in scripture to represent that union and its happy consequences—the Lord Jesus being called by the endearing epithet of bridegroom, and the believing soul the bride or spouse. Saith the Spirit to the soul, "*Thy maker is thine husband: the Lord of hosts is his name.*" The figure is very appropriate and expressive. For,

1st. As the proposals of marriage are made by the bridegroom and not the bride, so Christ first proposes the spiritual union to the soul.

2nd. In marriage the bridegroom and bride give themselves cheerfully to each other, and are no more twain, but one flesh; so in the spiritual covenant, Christ and the believing soul, are

so closely united, that the believer becomes one body and one spirit with Christ; and as our Lord expresseth it, he is one with Christ, and *he* is one with the Father. The union is strong. The soul is so completely identified with Christ, that it is declared, "*That neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate*" it from him.

3rd. As the bridegroom and bride become one, in marriage, he is bound for all debts or demands against the bride; and she at the same time is jointly possessed and legally entitled to share in the wealth and property of the bridegroom.

Thus in the spiritual union. In point of justification, all the sins of the believing soul are laid upon Christ; for the poor sinner himself is a bankrupt—he owes more than ten thousand talents, and has nothing to pay. But no sooner is he united to Christ by faith, than all his debts are discharged by the riches of Christ. His righteousness and merits—his blood and atonement, are a sufficient satisfaction for the sins of his blood bought millions—for the sins of the whole world—or of ten thousand worlds—if it had been so appointed. In closing this bargain, the soul is made an heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ; and, therefore, the apostle tells us, that all things are his—whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, &c. The whole Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost are his. Christ in his two natures is his and in all his offices. Christ is his Prophet, Priest and King; Christ's justifying, lawful filling righteousness is his. The blessed Spirit with all his enlightening, comforting, and sanctifying influences, is his. All that astonishing salvation that was purchased by Jesus Christ, and which, like an infinite ocean without bottom or shore, reaches from eternity to eternity. All this is his. The eternal purposes of God are his; all the wise providences of God are his; Jehovah's eternal covenant of peace—all the rich treasures of his precious word—all the promises of God—life and death—are his. Heaven with all its joys and ineffable glory and blessedness—an eternal kingdom, and a never fading crown—an exceeding and eternal weight of glory—"An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away"—such as "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" to conceive.—All these are the portion of the believing soul.

Angels, archangels, and all the adoring hosts above, are lost in wonder and amazement, when they behold the sinner's espousal to Christ, and the great contrast between the parties. The bridegroom is no less a personage than the infinite, eternal, unchangeable and independent Jehovah—the Almighty uncreated

I AM—the King eternal, immortal and invisible, who is being itself,—the fountain of life and source of all existence. He is the co-equal, co-eternal Son of God, the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person.

But the soul, to whom the proposals of everlasting life are made, and whom Christ stoops to woo, is a child of wrath, an heir of hell, defiled, deformed, polluted by sin.

The bridegroom is beauty itself—the essence of all natural and moral perfection. He is fairer than the sons of men—the “*rose of Sharon and the lilly of the valley.*” He “*is white and ruddy, the chieftest among ten thousand*”—he is altogether lovely. But the soul whom he courts to become his bride, is a mass of depravity and moral filth—fit for the vengeance of eternal fire.

The bridegroom is the darling of the Father—the object of Jehovah's delight; he loves him as himself; for all the glories and excellencies of the Godhead are essentially in him. He is the wonder of angels—the joy and admiration of millions of believers in heaven and earth. His presence constitutes the heaven of heavens, and all the blessedness of the celestial Paradise. One smile of his face—one taste of his love, makes the dying bed a couch of joy and holy delight, and communicates bliss to the soul of the martyr while blazing at the stake, or while being torn in pieces upon the rack. In a word, his smiles, his love, and his presence, would transform the bottomless burning lake of hell into a heaven of indescribable glory and blessedness.

But the heart of man cannot conceive, nor the tongue of Gabriel describe, the hellish deformity and loathsomeness of the soul that Christ entreats to be united to him. A dead carcase in the last stage of putrefaction, never appeared so hateful or abominable to man's delicate sensibilities, as does the unregenerate soul, in the sight of a God of immaculate purity and holiness.

Now say, did heaven or earth ever witness espousals, where there was such a contrast? Oh unbounded, unutterable grace! This is indeed love which passeth all understanding. And what is truly strange, often when Jesus, this glorious personage, comes as a suiter and makes the most advantageous proposals to the poor, wretched soul, and uses arguments and expostulations, and stands and knocks at the door from Sabbath to Sabbath, from year to year, and courts her even with tears, to open the door and be united to him, he is forced to depart. The defiled and accursed sinner treats all his overtures of mercy and love, with contempt, and keeps his heart securely locked and bolted against him; while the Devil, the world, and filthy lust, or some abominable idol is embraced, indulged and caressed.

Does any one inquire the reason of this base and ungrateful conduct? I would answer, the sinner in his unrenewed state is wedded to that Old serpent, the Devil; is subject to the God of this world. The spirit that works in the children of disobedience is the beloved of the sinner's soul. The thoughts of parting with him are worse than death. Our Lord represents him as a strong man armed, holding full possession and keeping his goods in peace. In Isaiah the soul is said to be in covenant with death, and in agreement with hell. He hates God, and Christ, and holiness. He despises praying and the word of God—religion and all the service of God. He is in love with himself, the world, and all manner of wickedness, and would risk death and all the torments of the damned, rather than part with his beloved sins.

Now, to divorce the soul from the Devil, the Lord Jesus Christ, by the enlightning power and influences of his Spirit, directs the thunders of the divine law against the conscience. The arrows of the Almighty stick fast in the heart and drink up his spirits. He feels to his inmost soul that he is a sinner, a guilty and condemned sinner, under the wrath and curse of God, and just ready to plunge the fiery gulf and feel the burning beams of the wrath of Jehovah enkindled in his soul, the foretastes of the horrors of damnation. His troubled conscience finds no peace day nor night. But there is yet an insurmountable bar which shuts Christ out of the heart. The sinner is devotedly attached to the law as a covenant of works. He has a high opinion of his own strength, and believes that he can at least do something towards his salvation. To be dead to all hope in himself—to be stripped naked before God and come as a beggar to the feet of Jesus—to be indebted to sovereign grace for all, is too humbling to proud nature. Therefore, it is the most difficult of all things, to divide the affections of the heart from its self righteousness.

Such is the disposition of the sinner, and his attachment to the law as a covenant of works, that he endeavors to make a saviour of his reformati ons, his prayers, tears, resolutions and strong desires, or something done by himself. He holds fast his own righteousness till the Omnipotent arm tears him from it. Like the Athenian who swam to the boat and would have forced his passage in it—when one hand was cut off he laid hold with the other, and when that was taken away, he seized it with his teeth until his head was cut off.

Therefore, to kill his legal hopes and reduce him to the necessity of flying to Christ as his only refuge, the Spirit of God lays open to his view the hellish wickedness and total depravity of his nature. He sees his heart, and feels it to be just as God describes it—“*Deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*”—

a cage of unclean birds—a sink of pollution—a workshop for the Devil.—*Every imagination of the thoughts of his hearts is only evil continually*—A fountain of wickedness, his heart is “like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt,”—out of it “proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” He perceives all his prayers and tears to be sinful in the sight of heaven, and is convinced that if salvation could be gained by one good thought or pious affection, he must sink irrecoverably to endless woe. Now, like David, he feels the pains of hell take hold of him; he finds grief and trouble. Such are the distress and anguish of his soul, that none can describe them; nor can those form any idea of his pangs, who have not felt them. He struggles for salvation, like the drowning man for life. He pleads for mercy with bitter cries, like the condemned criminal for a pardon. One while all hopes of mercy are gone; again he has some faint glimmerings of hope that there is mercy for him; but again, all hope is lost. Thus he is tossed between hope and despair, until he is slain by the law, and lies at the feet of Jesus, crying, Lord help or I perish.

In his darkest hour, when the poor sinner feels as if just sinking into the pit of hell, Jesus the glorious bridegroom, appears to his view. In him, he beholds the bright and ineffable glories of the Godhead, all the perfect uncreated excellencies of the Deity. He looks upon him as being, in his person, his two natures, and his mediatorial offices, an almighty, all-sufficient, and willing Saviour. He sees the law magnified and made honorable, by his glorious righteousness, and justice completely satisfied by the rich price which he paid for man’s redemption. He sees that plan in all its beauty, by which such a poor hell deserving sinner as he is, can be pardoned and saved. He beholds an infinite ocean of mercy, salvation and eternal life, bursting from the pierced side and breaking heart of the incarnate Son of God, and feels all the mountains of his sin and guilt carried away and sunk in the Red Sea of redeeming blood. He feels as if he were in a new world.—“*Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.*” He has a new knowledge of God and of his precious word: a new love to the divine law—new breathings after God and holiness. “*The peace of God which passeth all understanding*” fills his soul. He rejoices “with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

No tongue can tell—no language can describe—the praise, and gratitude, and love of the soul;

“While sweetly, humbly he beholds at length
Christ as his only righteousness and strength.”

At the moment when the sinner beholds Christ by faith, and all the glorious beauty of the bridegroom, he cries out, the one half, nor the ten thousandth part of thy wisdom, thy loveliness, and thine excellency, was never told.

This is the day of the soul's espousal to Christ, when with praise, gratitude, and wonder, it falls before the Eternal All, and in language of ravished delight, exclaims, Oh Jesus, thou art sufficient. *"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee."*

II. Speak of the blissful consequences of the soul's espousal to Christ.

Were I to sum up the exercises of the young convert—the kindness of his youth and the love of his espousal, I would say, that they consist, in love and wonder, praise, gratitude and adoration, breathing after holiness, and longing and thirsting for communion with God, and recommending the Lord Jesus Christ to sinners. But to be more particular.—The young convert employs himself in *praising and glorifying God*—in singing the songs of Paradise. *"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings; and he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto God."*

In telling the great things which the Lord has done for him, and calling upon the people of God to assist him in praising and glorifying his holy name: this exercise is peculiar to the soul in its first love. The woman in the parable, when she had found her money, and the man when he had found the lost sheep, called their friends and neighbors to rejoice with them. And when the sinner finds Christ, the pearl of great price, his heart is so glad—he is so full of heavenly joy, that he runs to his christian friends, and tells them as Philip did Nathaniel, *"We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."*

Another employment of young converts in the love of their espousal—is sweet conversation of heaven and divine things. When they are met together, Christ and his love fill their whole hearts, and all their thoughts. With pleasure they tell each other of their blissful seasons, their new views of the lovely Jesus, and discoveries of the precious word, and sweet feasts of heavenly manna. *"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another."* *"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."*

The young convert, in the day of his espousal, in the time of his first love, when he goeth after the Lord, delights in prayer; for then he gets near to God, as a child to its father. He loves the courts of the house of God, and delights in his ordinances; for in them he often meets with Christ, sees his glory and feels

his love shed abroad in his soul. From Pisgah's top he sees his Father's house, and by the hand of faith plucks delicious fruits from the tree of life, in the midst of the Paradise of God. Yes, every soul who ever felt the pardoning love of God in Christ, can remember the kindness of their youth and the love of their espousals when their hearts went out after the Lord, and rejoiced all the day long in his praise. They will tell in the language of the poet:

“Sweet was the time, when first I felt
My Saviour’s pardoning blood
Applied to cleanse my soul from guilt
And bring me home to God.

Soon as the morn the light revealed,
His praises tuned my tongue;
And when the evening shades prevailed
His love was all my song.

In vain the tempter spreads his wiles—
The world no more could charm—
I lived upon my Saviour’s smiles,
And leaned upon his arm.

In prayer, my soul drew near the Lord
And saw his glory shine;
And when I read his holy word,
I called each promise mine.”

In the day of his espousals, the believer is ready to conclude, that he shall sin no more; that he shall never feel a cold heart or have gloomy doubts. And almost thinks every professor of religion a hypocrite, who is not flaming with love to God. If you were to tell him, that his heart would become carnal and backslide, he would look upon the idea with abhorrence.

III. We will proceed to show some of the marks and consequences of backsliding.

It is a melancholly truth, that many who have tasted and felt the love of Jesus, have shamefully gone astray, after all the glorious things that he has done for them. They have pierced and wounded him, *crucified him afresh, and have put him to an open shame before the world.*

Of all the sins that men or Devils have committed, there are none so horrible, so displeasing to God, as those of his blood bought purchase. I once heard an eminent divine observe, that infinite justice had provided a hell for the punishment of impenitent, unconverted sinners; but Eternal Wisdom had never yet

devised a hell adequate to the sins of his own backslidden people.

When God delivered the Jews at the Red Sea, *the kindness of their youth and the love of their espousals* was strong. *They went after him in the wilderness* and sang his praises. But they soon “*Forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.*” The Lord treated them as the *apple of his eye*—he carried them as on eagle’s wings—he made them ride upon the high places of the earth—he made them suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock. “*But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked, forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of salvation.*”

The solemn charge which the Son of God brings against the church of Ephesus, is that of having left their first love. But as this crying sin, of departing from the living God, and lightly esteeming the Rock of their salvation, lies at the door of multitudes of the present day, we shall mention some of the signs and evidences of backsliding from God.

When christians begin to feel secret prayer a burden rather than a privilege, and neglect it under some plausible excuses; when their tongues are tied and their mouths shut, and have little to say about Christ and religion; when they rarely speak of their spiritual exercises; when they lose their relish for the heavenly manna, and sigh for the pleasures, pursuits and vanities of the world; when they drop off from the communion table, from time to time, and excuse the horrid wickedness of such conduct, by declaring they have bad feelings, and presently feel perfectly contented in their neglect of this sacred duty, and secretly mortified and ashamed that they ever professed religion, and sorry that they had ever sat at the communion; when they can stay away from the preaching of God’s word and the ordinances of his house, for weeks and months, and yet feel no compunctions of conscience; when they are carried away with new doctrines and opinions, contrary to the word of God; when the doctrines of the gospel in which they professed to find Christ and obtain a blessed hope of eternal life are rejected and treated with contempt; when the ministers whom they once esteemed their spiritual fathers, the instruments of their awakening and conversion, are treated as deceivers and impostors.

I would call the attention of those of you, who were present when the first sacrament was administered in Henderson county. Many then, appeared to manifest, *the kindness of their youth and love of their espousal*, and seemed to go after the Lord. I conversed with many of the young people and admitted them to the communion, who were all life and zeal, and seemed indeed to have started for immortal glory. Their conversation savoured of nothing but Christ and heaven. Every evening and morning, the woods

resounded with their importunate prayers and cries to God. At the table of the Lord, they appeared to feel heaven upon earth.

Had I then told them, that before ten years, they would be days and weeks without ever praying in secret, and without any disposition to speak of Christ and heaven; had I told them that the gospel would be preached with faithfulness in a few miles of them, and that they would not go once in a year to hear it; that they would publicly deny their Lord by absenting themselves from his table; that sacraments should be administered convenient to them, and that they would not so much as give their attendance at them;—they would have answered me as Hazael did the prophet.—“*But what, is thy servant a dog, that he shauld do this great thing?*” To such the Lord addresses himself when he says, “*Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number.*”

But what is, if possible, more extraordinary, men, who at that time, Jehu-like, seemed to drive on rapidly in the heavenly course, have not only backslidden from their first love, but have forsaken the church and are now anxiously seeking her destruction.

The doctrines of the cross which they professed to be the wisdom and power of God to their salvation, they reject with abhorrence. Theirs is the case to which the prophet alludes in the tenth verse. “*Pass over the isles of Chittim and see, and send unto Kedan and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods which are yet no gods? but thy people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.*” Among the heathen nations of the earth, no such instances of ingratitude and rebellion can be found. And now let every backsliding soul seriously inquire, as if in sight of the bar of Jehovah—was my soul espoused to Christ? Was it Christ or was it some subtle deception of the Devil.

SERMON XL.



VINDICATION OF THE EXERCISES IN THE REVIVAL OF 1800.



“Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things mwhich ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.”

MATTHEW xi. 4, 5, 6.



WHENEVER Christ has appeared for the salvation of sinners, it has been in a manner contrary to the expectations of a blind world—and in a way too humbling to the pride of the carnal heart.

When he made his advent into the world, when he came in mercy to seek and to save that which was lost, he does not appear in princely pomp like a mighty monarch of the earth. He veils his Godhead in clay, assumes the appearance of a servant—a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, rejected and despised of men: so poor that he has not where to lay his head and must work a miracle to raise a farthing with which to pay his tax. And thus it has been in every period of the church since his resurrection and ascension,—when in a day of his power he comes for the salvation of sinners. And still he appears and works widely contrary to the expectation of the carnal mind, and in a way humbling and abasing to the proud heart of man.

The Jews could not regard Jesus of Nazareth a common carpenter, a poor, contemptible, despised man, travelling up and down the country, with no higher companions than a few poor fishermen, as the Messiah. They thought it altogether unreasonable that he should be the Saviour of the world, the Son of God, that Christ foretold by Moses and the prophets. This their carnal minds could not admit. Thought they, it is too humbling to follow such a Messiah as this: the fellow is only an impostor.

Well, my brethren, Christ's coming at the present day in the power of the Godhead to visit his church with the outpouring of his Spirit, is marked with circumstances equally unreasonable in the opinion of the proud and wordly minded. They think this noisy tumult and uproar is mad confusion, and cannot believe this falling down, and shrieking, and crying for mercy—this praising, shouting, and rejoicing, to be the glorious work of the Eternal God—that it is that revival of religion—that day of God's power, for which christians have been longing and praying.

The subject of inquiry among the Jews was this: Is Jesus of Nazareth the true Messiah, the promised Christ? and the question which agitates the minds and claims the attention of the world at present, is, whether this is the work of God: is this a revival of religion, produced by the Spirit of Christ?

In the context it is said, that John the Baptist, the forerunner and friend of Jesus, sent two of his disciples to ask him "*Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*" Art thou indeed the Christ. Whether John through darkness and unbelief had some doubts upon this subject, or whether the message was sent for the purpose of removing doubts and scruples from the minds of his disciples, we cannot determine. One thing is certain, doubts did exist in the mind of many, and for this reason the question is proposed.—"*Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*"

Jesus answers this question by referring to plain and incontestable evidence of his Messiahship, viz: the God-like effects which followed the operations of his power. "*Go, and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*" Blessed is he who has no prejudice against the low and contemptible appearance of my person; or the strange and unusual features of my work. Blessed is he, who hath no such prejudices against me, as shall prevent him from receiving the blessings, I came to bestow; or from accepting the salvation which I came to purchase.

Many there are who are asking, Is this Christ or do we look for another? Is this the work of the Lord, or of the Devil? Is this the power of God, or a delusion of the arch fiend of hell? Such inquirers are directed, as were John's disciples, to look at the divine evidence attending the work.

My design in speaking from this subject, is to prove that the powerful appearance of the revival of religion, at present existing in our country, is the work of God, and if possible to remove

every prejudice, which might occasion some to be offended in Christ and hardened through unbelief.

To obtain this object we shall—

- I. Give a brief statement of the present work of God.
- II. Describe some of the effects which prove it to be a work of divine power.
- III. Account for many strange appearances which attend the work, upon the principles of reason and scripture.

IV. The danger of being offended at Christ, or indulging prejudice against the work of God.

I. Give a brief statement of the present work of God.

This blessed work first appeared in the Gasper river congregation, early in the spring of 1797. The doctrines of the new birth, faith, and repentance, which were uniformly preached, seemed to excite serious inquiry in the minds of many concerning the state of their souls. Many asked, Is religion a sensible thing? Can it be felt and known? If so, all is wrong with me. About the month of May, the work began to be visible. During the summer, a great many in that congregation were awakened, and nine or ten professed to experience the love of Jesus. On the fourth Sabbath in July, 1798, the sacrament was administered at Gasper river.—On Monday God poured out his Spirit in a remarkable manner. The awakening work was very general, and there were but few families in the congregation, where there were not more or less seriously alarmed. At Muddy river, on the first Sabbath in September, the sacrament was administered. At this time, divine power seemed to attend the preaching of the word, and a general solemnity was visible. About this period, the work spread through all the congregations. Deep concern appeared in almost every company, and every family. A great many were deeply and solemnly awakened: and a goodly number professed to experience a sweet sense of pardoned sin. In July, 1799, at the sacrament on Red river, the power of God was manifested in a very general awakening of the unconverted; and a few precious souls felt happy in the pardoning love of Jesus. At Gasper river sacrament in the month of August, especially on Monday, God poured out his Spirit in a wonderful manner. Great numbers were struck to the ground, and made to cry for mercy, as the condemned malefactor would for a pardon. Several persons were filled with joy and peace in believing; and in a few weeks, about twenty professed to feel LIVING RELIGION. At Muddy river sacrament, in September, the power of God was equally visible. Sinners were powerfully awakened; a few precious souls were happily converted; and the souls of God's people were filled with the consolations of the Spirit, like old bottles filled with new wine. In the year 1800, the work appeared with greater power, and produced greater effects, than the

present generation ever before witnessed. At Red river sacrament, in June, ten persons professed to experience a living change. At Gasper and other places where the Lord's supper was administered, multitudes attended from a great distance; and whole days and nights were spent in the most solemn manner. Some rejoicing and praising God—some in agony, crying for mercy—while others just delivered from their burden, were speaking the language of heaven, and telling the great things the Lord had done for them. Many persons from the Cumberland settlements attended at Gasper, who came to see the strange work, of which they had heard so much. Here some of them felt it in their own souls, and experienced its converting power: and by this means the divine flame was spread throughout all Cumberland.

It was supposed that, at Gasper, about forty five persons professed to obtain religion; at Muddy river sacrament, where the work was equally powerful, about fifty; at the Ridge, about forty five: and at Shiloh, about seventy.

Time would fail to mention the rapid progress of the work through the settlements of Cumberland and Barren, and along the banks of the Ohio. To relate the circumstances of the work present year, 1801, is unnecessary, since it is as great during the and powerful as last year. This is a short statement of the work. We will proceed—

II. To describe some of its effects, which prove it to be a work of divine power.

The first effect we will mention, is a deep, rational and scriptural conviction. He who is a subject of this work, is brought by the preaching of God's word, to see the extent, the strictness, and spirituality of his law; and by a feeling conviction, he discovers that he has spoken God's law days without number. He sees his life one continued scene of sin and rebellion against God; and we find that this conviction is of an increasing nature. The man is first convinced of the sins of his external conduct; then the sins of his nature; afterwards the sins of his duties; and last of all, he feels to the very heart, the horrible guilt and unconquerable power of unbelief. It is also a very painful conviction. The person feels his situation intolerable. He groans, and prays, and cries for mercy; and often he feels his guilt such an insufferable burden, that his bodily strength fails, and he falls to the ground, in appearance breathless and lifeless.

2nd. When he is dead to all hope in himself, and lies on the very brink of destruction, he is delivered by a view of the glory, sufficiency, and willingness of Christ to save. Our young converts, the subjects of this work, very frequently tell us of the beauty and loveliness which they behold in Christ—what a fullness there is in him; yea, a sufficiency for all the world, if they

would come. They see such a willingness in him to save, that none who come to him shall perish. They speak of the hateful and abominable nature, which they discover in sin, and the heavenly peace and joy, felt under a sense of the love of Jesus. Now, is this not the blind seeing, the deaf hearing, and the raising of the dead to life?

3d. A third effect produced by this work upon all who are subject to it, is a loving, benevolent disposition. The moment they discover the glory of the Redeemer, and feel his love shed abroad in their souls, their hearts bleed with pity for poor sinners. With what zeal, with what fervency, love and compassion, do they warn them of their danger, and that Christ is willing to save them; with what importunity do they plead with them to come to Christ—to give him their hearts—and feel the sweetness of his love.

4th. Another effect is a knowledge of Christ and divine things, of which the person, before, was ignorant. I have heard little children, when they were delivered and had first obtained sweet views of Christ, describing the glories of Immanuel—the beauties of the plan of salvation—the all-sufficiency of the divine Saviour; and at the same time, recommending him to sinners in language so rational, so scriptural, and yet so sweet and heavenly, that I have felt mortified and humble beside them, and could not by any means, have spoken upon these subjects, unless at the moment, I experienced some of the same lively views and exercises.

5th. Another effect is that produced on the hearts and lives of the genuine subjects of the world. To see him who frolicked and danced, become the humble, praying christian; to see the drunkard, the swearer, and the gambler, leaping and praising God, and telling what the Lord has done for their souls; to see the profane scoffer at God and religion, praying in secret—praying in his family—and walking in the ways of God's commandments:—I say, are not all these things taken together, the blind receiving their sight, the deaf hearing, the lame walking, the cleansing of the lepers, and the raising the dead to life?

III. Account, upon principles of reason, and from scripture, for many strange appearances attending this work.

Says the prejudiced mind, about this work are many strange things—altogether new to me—I cannot understand them—and don't approve of them.

1st. This falling down, and lying cramped, as if without breath or life:—this I do not understand—can it be an operation of God's Spirit?

I answer—This may be accounted for upon principles of plain reason. So intimate is the connexion between the soul and body, that it is nothing strange if a man, filled with an un-

common sense of terror and divine wrath, or with an uncommon share of heavenly comfort, should fall to the ground and his bodily strength be overcome. Edwards in his sermon on the distinguishing marks of a work of God; expresses himself in such language as this: *Were God to give the sinner a discovery of his state as it really is, he would not only fall to the ground, but sink dead upon the spot.* Or if he were to let the streams of divine glory flow into the pardoned believing soul, in the same measure that they flow in upon the glorified spirits in heaven,—he would not only fall to the ground, but the clay vessel would burst—and permit the soul to escape to climes of pure delight. But falling to the ground, either under uncommon impressions of terror or comfort, is exactly scriptural and supported by many examples. Paul “*fell to the earth*” and “*trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*” The jailor “*came trembling and fell down,*” saying “*What must I do to be saved?*” And Habakkuk, speaking of the majesty of God, cries out, “*My belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice; rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself.*” The prophet Daniel, giving an account of a discovery which he had of Christ, and telling how he was affected, says, “*There remained nor strength in me; for my comeliness was turned into corruption, and retained no strength.*” The apostle John, speaking of a similar manifestation of divine glory, says, “*And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.*”

2nd. But, says the objector, I cannot understand these vehement shrieks, and hideous outcries.

Strange, indeed! that you cannot account for a condemned sinner's crying out for mercy, when filled with the terror of the Almighty. You are not surprised to hear an offending slave, under the rod of an angry master, crying for mercy; nor do you think it at all uncommon for a poor captive to beg for life and deliverance from a conquering enemy who holds him in his power. But yet you think it very strange that a guilty sinner should be afraid of an angry God, or roar loud for mercy, when he sees hell gaping to receive him. Edwards in the sermon before mentioned makes this observation: “*Were a person suspended over a deep pit filled with devouring flames, by a small cord just ready to break, would it seem strange to hear him screaming and cry out for deliverance?* Then, should it seem strange to see a guilty sinner, hanging over the bottomless, flaming pit of hell by the brittle thread of life, and that thread in the hand of an angry God,—to see him cry out for mercy, in most extreme anguish?” The command of the king of Nineveh to all his subjects, as related in Jonah was to “*cry mightily unto God.*” And David, though a dear child of God, in the hour of desertion and temptation, cried and roared out for deliverance. The

three thousand convicted under Peter's sermon cried, saying, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*"

3rd. But again, says the objector, this boisterous noise and confusion, which abound in the multitude in the time of this work, always offends me, and I think it forbidden by the apostle in the 14th chapter of I. Corinthians.

What the apostle there forbids, is a confusion of exercises, in the time of divine worship, which does not apply to the present case. The exercise which you deem confusion, always comes after, or at the close of public worship, and is commonly the effects produced by public preaching. When the congregation is dismissed, were the multitude to scatter home with the same impressions upon their minds, the confusion would be the same. Some would be singing, some praying, some rejoicing, some crying for mercy, and others telling the great things the Lord had done for their souls. All the difference is, the people under these exercises, stay upon the ground, which brings the various exercises together. When the congregation is dismissed, public worship is over; and if the people chose to stay at the place, to converse together, to sing, and pray, and exhort one another, where is the confusion? As "*Iron sharpeneth iron, so the face of a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*" Their exercises and feelings beget new impressions upon others; for those deeply impressed with the importance of their own salvation, and filled with joy for the pardon of sin, are prone to talk upon these subjects to their thoughtless children, friends and neighbors. This strikes them with deep convictions, and the exercises increase—and all the time God's work is progressing onward in perfect order, although all appears disorder and confusion to the carnal eye. Just such examples of confusion I will shew you recorded in the word of God. Observe the conduct of the church, after the captivity, when the foundation of the second Temple was laid. "The ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice, and many shouted aloud for joy; so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy, from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off." At the close of Peter's sermon, three thousand were converted and baptized; and no doubt but four or five thousand in all were convicted. What a strange appearance, suppose you, it would be, to see so large a body at the close of a sermon, with hearts wrung with anguish, crying out, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" Would this not be confusion indeed?

4th. There is another exercise among the people altogether new to me: that of persons being so deeply and painfully distressed about sinners in their unconverted, or (as they call it) dreadful state.

This exercise is entirely rational: our own experience teaches us, that there is a tender sympathy in human nature, by which good men are often affected with the miseries and distresses of their fellow creatures. Is it strange, then, that christians, who have felt the terrors of an ungodly state, and who have clear views of the narrow escape which they have made from the jaws of damnation, should be burdened and painfully distressed for their friends and neighbors—whose wretched and deplorable state they behold—and whom they see careless and unconcerned upon the trembling brink of hell? But it is in accordance with scriptural record. The prophet Jeremiah describes this very exercise: *“Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child; wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?”* Isaiah speaks of this exercise as common to all the people of God.—*“For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.”* By Zion, we are doubtless to understand all the children of God—all his spiritual Israel: and by her *travailing*, nothing else than the painful anxiety which the people of God feel for the salvation of poor, lost sinners. The apostle Paul tells us, that he had this exercise himself—*“I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh”*—*“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.”*

5th. Many of these people pretend to act faith for others, and will tell us they receive comfortable answers to their prayers for the conversion and salvation of other persons.

There is a variety of examples in scripture, and particularly in the New Testament of persons, who acted faith for others, for their children and servants, and received answers to their prayers for them. I might mention the woman of Canaan for her daughter—the centurion for his servant,—and many other instances. But we are told that these persons did not so much as believe that Christ was the Saviour of the world. All they had to believe was, that he was able to work the miracle.

Christ gives a very different account of the faith of the Centurion.—*“Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”* not in John the Baptist—not in Mary, or Peter, or John, or in any of the apostles. But these persons acted faith only for temporal blessings,—no one can show scripture for acting faith for spiritual blessings for others. Strange, indeed, that the compassionate Jesus who came to purchase and bestow spiritual blessings upon the sons of men, and never sent any one away disappointed, that came to him for temporal blessings, shoud yet deny spiritual blessings to poor sinners, when his praying children ask them in faith: God’s word expressly

supports the doctrine.—Hannah received an answer to her prayers, and “*went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.*” Good old Simeon received an answer to his prayers; for it is said, that “*it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ,*” John asserts the doctrine.—“*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.*”

6th. There is another thing which I don’t like. This strange leaping and skipping about, when in apparent ecstacies of joy—which is called by some, dancing David’s dance.

If designed and voluntary dancing were introduced as an ordinance of the church, your objection would have weight. The practice would be truly absurd and ridiculous. But such is not the case. There is not one motion of the body attending this exercise which is voluntary. This dance, if dance it may be called, is entirely involuntary, and produced altogether by extraordinary and overpowering impressions on the mind. The person, filled, as it were, brim-full of spiritual joy and comfort, in ecstacies of delight and wonder, skips and leaps about, scarce knowing what he is doing. This is all the dance that attends the exercise. And plain precedents of such dancing as this can be produced from the word of God. When the ark of God was brought home, such was the inexpressible joy and satisfaction of David, that he “*danced before the Lord with all his might.*”

The lame man, who was cured by Peter and John at the gate of the Temple called Beautiful, is another example of such a dance: and this was the effect of the great joy and comfort of his mind; “*Leaping up, he stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.*”

7th. But there is another thing objectionable. A wheeling over, and other strange agitations of the body.”

This wheeling over and those other agitations of the body, have nothing in them, either physically or morally, evil. I would ask the prejudiced mind, if any command of God is broken by these exercises. I presume none at all. If no command is broken by these exercises, and they have nothing in them, physically or morally, evil, then, your objections are trifling, and groundless, and you have no reason to be offended by what is innocent and harmless. To ascertain whether persons thus agitated are under the influence of the Divine Spirit, is to find out the views and exercises of their minds at such times; and if they are rational and scriptural, it is a matter of no consequence.

what their bodily motions are, or whether they have any at all.

8th. I frequently see those who profess to be happy and comfortable, smiling and laughing. Such conduct I think too light and unbecoming the exercises of religion.

It is evident that laughing proceeds from a principle implanted in human nature by the Creator. If so, men would have had the same proneness to laughter, if sin had never entered the world. Now, it so happens, that we sinful creatures, seldom laugh, unless at something wicked, or at the weakness and infirmities of our fellow creatures. But if sin had not been introduced into the world, there would have been no sinful laughing; for there would have been no wicked or foolish object to have laughed at. Well, if there had been no sin, man would have had the same propensity to laugh as now; and what would have excited his laughter? Doubtless the joy and satisfaction they would have found in the love of God. If joy and satisfaction would have excited laughter *then*, why may it not *now*? But it is scriptural also, that God's children should rejoice, and even laugh, under sweet, comfortable exercises. When Abraham received a sweet promise from God and believed it, he "*fell on his face and laughed*" "*They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.*" "*Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers; till he fill thy mouth with laughter, and thy lips with rejoicing.*" "*Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh.*"

SERMON XLI.

THE HINDRANCE OF THE WORK OF GOD.

“There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.” JOSHUA vii, 13.

The life of the believer in this world, is compared very fitly to a warfare: for he has to encounter principalities and powers, and fight his way to his heavenly inheritance. Though feeble, and helpless of himself, he has to combat with all the powers of hell—with all the subtlety of Satan, and with the powerful corruptions of his own heart, and with the smiles, frowns and enticing allurements of this world: strong and powerful enemies, indeed such as he could never overcome if he were to engage them in his own strength. But since Jesus Christ is the captain of his salvation, and from him he receives all power, he has sufficient encouragement to engage his enemies and persevere in the christian warfare, with hopes of obtaining, at last, complete victory over all his adversaries. The great Captain General over the christian's salvation is the mighty God, the great eternal uncreated I AM, who performs his whole will and pleasure in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of this world. He it is, who stretched out the heavens and laid out the foundations of the earth; whose presence fills immensity and whose glory is infinite, and whose perfections are comprehended only by his own mind.

He created all things in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, and upholds universal nature by his own Almighty power. His presence fills the inhabitants of the heavenly world with joy, delight and wonder; and his wrath burns in a bottomless hell with unquenchable fire.

Then, what need believers fear? The strength of the mighty God of Jacob is engaged to make them conquerors, over all their enemies.

But, although there is strength sufficient in Christ, and there is treasured up in him all the fulness of the Godhead, yet, if all the children of God do not live near him and derive constant supplies from Christ, by faith, their enemies will gain ground upon them, and they shall fall by their hands. When they indulge their lusts, and suffer sin to get possession of their hearts, the channel through which they received strength, is stopped. The graces of the Spirit in the soul grow feeble, and they become an easy prey to their adversaries. In this chapter, from which we have selected our text, we are told that the Israelites, after having taken Jerocho, attacked Ai, one of the cities of the Canaanites; but without success. They were smitten and made to fly before their enemies. In the fifth verse we are told, that "*the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men; for they chased them from before the gate, even unto Shebarim, and smote them in going down; wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became like water. And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord, until the eventide,*" as an humble suppliant and laid the distressing situation of the children of Israel before God. "*Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us?*" "*O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turnelh their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land, shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth, and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?*" The true believer, like Joshua, must go to God for relief in every distress, and in every difficulty; for he is his only refuge and hiding place. To whom shall we go, says Peter, but unto thee, for thou hast the words of eternal life.

God tells Joshua what to do.—"*Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?*" As if he should say, why are you distressed about your present calamity? It is not sufficient to be lying upon your face, bemoaning—up and be inquiring diligently, and seeking the cause of your misfortune. "*Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them; for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it among their own stuff.* Therefore, the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed; neither will I be with you any more except you destroy the accursed from among you. *Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, there is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.*"

Although this passage of sacred scripture, is particularly addressed to the Israelites, with regard to the transgression in the affair of Achan; yet it is truly applicable to the people of God in all ages, when in similar circumstances. Therefore, we may observe.

First, that the children of Israel, being chosen of God and set apart from all other nations, as his peculiar people; are in that respect typical of the church of Christ in all ages to the ends of the world; the church is in scripture termed the Israel of God.

Secondly, That, as in the transgression of Achan, as touching the accursed thing, God was provoked in righteous judgment, to leave the children of Israel to fall before their enemies; so, also, when the people of God indulge the accursed thing, sin in their hearts, God will be provoked, to withhold from them, the special influences of his Spirit, and leave them to fall before their enemies.

Thirdly, As the children of Israel were called to search diligently for the accursed thing and remove it from them; so, also, the voice of God in his word commands his spiritual Israel to search and try their hearts, and seek diligently for the accursed thing—for every secret sin and flesh-pleasing lust, and cast them out from them, and repent, and mourn and be deeply humbled before God; yea, the voice of God to his church in general, and to every individual, in particular to every man and woman in this assembly to day, is, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, there is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you."

The doctrines arising from the words of the text are,

Ist. When sin, is undulged in the heart, the soul, can enjoy no communion with God, and, therefore, cannot stand before his enemies.

2d. It is the duty of every individual professing the religion of Jesus Christ, to examine carefully and search his heart diligently for the accursed thing, and cast it out from him, no difference how dear the object may be. "O Israel, thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you." In speaking farther from the subject we propose—

I. To shew who they are that indulge in the accursed thing, sin, in their hearts.

II. Shew the necessity of a close examination of the heart that the accursed thing may be discontinued and removed.

I. We are to shew who they are that indulge the accursed thing in their hearts.

And I entreat your serious attention, and beseech you to give yourselves to a strict examination; for we are discussing a subject very nearly concerning every one of you. The visible church consists of two classes of persons, viz. believers and unbelievers: those who are in Christ Jesus, born of God by regeneration: and those in a Christless state, dead in trespasses and sins. Sin may be indulged in both classes—by one, wholly; by the other, partially. In one it reigns predominant and holds the supremacy: in the other it may be indulged—and for a while obtain a quiet lodging in the heart, and stop the channel of communication between Christ and the soul. In speaking upon this division of the subject, we shall consider both these classes in order. As it regards nominal professors of religion, who are in an unregenerate state, the accursed thing is in the midst of them and they are not only unable to stand before their enemies, but are under complete subjection to them.

As Nebuchadnezzar bound Zechariah in setters of brass and put out his eyes, so Satan, the god of this world, hath blinded their eyes and bound them fast in chains, and is leading them, easy and contented, to the gloomy regions of the damned. They are willing slaves of their lusts, and sin has full dominion over them.

But to be somewhat more particular, we will observe,

1st. That there are many professors of religion, who live from day to day without prayer. Are there not many of those who now hear me, that rise from slumber in the morning and lie down at night, without ever praying to God in secret? Are there not some who never pray in their families; or if they attempt it at all, say prayers at night, but constantly neglect it in the morning; or perhaps, perform the duty on the Sabbath and neglect it throughout the week! If this be the case, there is an accursed thing in the midst of you—you are yet under the power of sin and Satan. A *prayerless Christian* is a contradiction of terms. He who can live without secret prayer, is dead in a spiritual sense; for prayer is the vital breath of the heaven born soul. A *prayerless professor* is a Christless sinner. Saith Jeremiah, “Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name.”

There are many professors of religion who pray in their families, receive baptism to their children, and sit at the Lord’s table; and yet when a suitable occasion presents itself, they can indulge in the practice of known sin, or, at least, what they call small sins; or, perhaps to quiet conscience, they give to such sins the name innocent amusement. They practice dancing, and open their doors for it—but this they call innocent amusement. They take a glass of grog too much, occasionally; but this is done for companion sake, and to obtain the name of

a good fellow. When abroad with their waggons, they can drive them on the Sabbath. This is called, "works of necessity." Thus by smoothing and polishing their sins, they lull conscience to sleep, and pursue the gratification of their lusts with greediness and delight. Are any of this class here to day? Let conscience speak and answer faithfully. If there are any such, there is an accursed thing in the midst of you—you are children of wrath, and bond slaves to Satan. Says Christ, "*if ye love me, keep my commandments.*" Must he not be a Judas indeed, who professes to love Christ, and will sit at his table, when, at the same time, he can frolic and dance—drink to excess, and profane God's holy Sabbath?

3d. There are many, who profess to love Christ, and would fain support a name to live. They pray, attend public worship, and take the Sacrament of the Lord's supper, and have a very fair show of religion. But they have never gone farther than the outer shell of godliness. They do not enjoy the light of God's countenance in the performance of every duty—they have no communion with God—no views of the divine glory, or a sense of the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart. Of these things they are entirely ignorant. Talk with them about God's method of dealing with the soul in bringing it from death unto life; or of the nature of the operations of divine grace in the heart; or of the sweet sensations and comfortable feelings enjoyed under the light of God's reconciled countenance; or of the grief and distress the soul feels when He is absent; they do not know what you mean—they have no better idea of what you say, than if you were speaking Greek or Hebrew. A sure sign, this of spiritual death. Now examine the matter well, for if this be the case of any of you, there is in the midst of you that accursed thing, sin. That soul which has not found more sweetness in viewing the divine glory as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ—which has not felt more comfort in a sense of the love of God shed abroad in the heart, than the men of this world could in corn or wine, and riches and honors; that soul, I say, is yet "*dead in trespasses and sins.*" Profess what they may, if such persons can go a round of external duty, and satisfy their consciences with their way of going to heaven, it is all they desire. It is far otherwise with the child of God. His design in attending to his duty, is to enjoy communion with God.—And when he cannot enjoy the presence of his heavenly Father in the appointed ordinances, he is distressed, and cannot rest contented until he obtains a sweet assurance of his acceptance with God.

4th. There are many calling themselves Christians, who habitually neglect serious and close self-examination. Nay, they are afraid to know their own hearts. They dare not ex-

amine their hopes to the foundation, lest they should see their desperate situation. When they hear practical, soul searching doctrine, they cannot endure it. And for this reason:—it destroys their false hopes, and shakes the sandy foundation upon which they are built;—and conscience being thereby abandoned, tells them that they are strangers to the life and power of godliness. Sometimes, when conscience is half waked from its slumbers, they are afraid that all is not right with them, and perhaps they will resolve to search matters to the bottom. But when they begin the examination, a consciousness of the sinfulness of their hearts, makes them draw back and refrain from a thorough search. A sure evidence that the accursed thing is harbored in the soul. Similar to this is the case of a man who has stolen goods concealed in his house. If he sees a man coming with authority to search every secret corner and private apartment, he feels himself guilty, and therefore would wish to evade the search, lest the goods should be found in his possession. Such persons are described by our Lord—“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved.”

5th. Many there are, calling themselves christians who are depending entirely on their former experience. They have had some convictions of sin, and perhaps some flashes of joy and comfort too, seven, ten, or twenty years ago. With this they rest satisfied, and maintain a strong hope of heaven and eternal life, without any further examination of the matter. Though they enjoy no communion with God, yet having once in their lives been burdened and heavy laden with sin, and having experienced some flashes of joy and comfort, they will evade all close, practical preaching. Yea it is almost impossible to overturn their false hopes, and bring them seriously to examine themselves. If there are any such here to day, I assure them, that there is in the midst of them an accursed thing. The true lover of Jesus cannot rest contentedly in the dark. What he has enjoyed years ago can no more satisfy him at the present, than the food which he ate months since. For his life and strength being derived from Christ, he must have constant supplies to enable him to grow in conformity to the laws of God. Present enjoyment of the light of God’s countenance, and fresh discoveries of the divine glory, he must obtain; or else his soul is grieved and distressed, and finds no rest until these are obtained.

6th. Others there are who depend upon their feelings and supposed enjoyments. By this means they nourish a false hope of heaven and immortal glory. Now and then they have some

enlargements in prayer—some sweet meltings of affection, and some earnest desires after happiness. These are mistaken for communion with God, and their hopes are thereby strengthened; and this affords them inexpressible satisfaction and comfort. But this satisfaction and comfort are not attended by proper views of the glory of God as exhibited in the plan of salvation. They are not attended by pantings and longings of the soul after conformity to the law of God; nor with sorrow and grief for sin, because it is dishonoring to God. Let such persons be assured, there is an accursed thing in the midst of them; and, continuing thus, they will be an easy an eternal prey to the grand adversary of souls. O let me beseech and entreat you, to examine yourselves carefully, and search for the accursed thing, and cast it from you; for if you are to be found amongst any of these six classes, you have every reason to conclude that you are strangers to Christ, and “*dead in trespasses and sins.*”

But, as God’s own dear children are often guilty of indulging sin in their hearts, it ought to be their great concern to search for the accursed thing—to seek diligently for every sin with a firm resolution to have it crucified: for as long as sin is quietly indulged, God and the soul can have no communion with each other. Says David, “*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*”

I shall therefore attempt to point out some of these among the people of God, who are guilty of indulging the accursed thing in their hearts.

Many of God’s children are often guilty of an inordinate love of the things of the present world. It is true they have started upon their journey toward the heavenly Canaan. They have been delivered from the bondage of Satan, and from the enslaving power and dominion of sin. Yet like the Israelites of old, they lose their appetite for the heavenly manna, and begin to long for the flesh pots of Egypt. Their hearts and affections get engaged in the things of this world, and they lose in some measure, their relish for spiritual and divine things. The world is one of the christian’s most dangerous enemies, and is engaged in a continual war against his soul. Yet the world often introduces itself into his affections, under the fair show of industry, and is always attended with a great many wants and necessities. This and the other matters of necessity engross the attention. When God, in his word and providence, calls upon the creature to be engaged in certain duties—to spend such a day in attending to fasting and prayer—to set apart such a portion of time for serious meditation and close examination, or for solemn preparation for the sacrament of the Supper—for attending the preaching of the gospel, and such duties,—O, says the world, God’s demands are unreasonable—you cannot afford the time;

And if you spend so much time in such matters, your work will fall behind, or you may loose your crop: it is true your salvation is a matter of great importance, but it is also of great moment that you provide for your family.—Therefore disobey God, and obey me. When God calls upon the creature to devote a part of his substance to pious uses,—as the relief of the poor and distressed,—says the world, your circumstances will not afford it—you have little enough for yourself. And thus it is that God is disobeyed and the world idolized, even by many of his own children. To their shame be it spoken, they are much more concerned at heart to provide food and raiment for their children, than to provide for their immortal souls. They are often much more concerned about their temporal welfare, than they are about where they will dwell forever. There is no doubt but many here to-day would find such to be the case if they would only examine the matter carefully. Let such be assured that there is in their hearts an accursed thing; and as long as the world is thus idolized by them, God and their souls can have no communion. Let them speedily remove the accursed thing, lest they fall an easpray before their enemies.

2nd. Many true believers are often guilty of a wretched lukewarmness and formality in the service of God. And what is still more to be regretted, they are careless and insensible of their situation. They lose their views of the beauty and loveliness of Christ. Their pantings of souls after holiness, are lamentably abated—their incessant longing after glory, are grown feeble—their affections cold and their love weak, and they can scarcely be distinguished from the formal professor, who has only a name to live, while he is dead. They have in a gret measure become strangers to communion with God;—a sad, but sure evidence that there is an accursed thing in their hearts, which provokes God to keep himself distant from their souls. Indeed, lukewarmness and formality among the people of God, are crimes of the most aggravated nature. While in that condition, in the first place, they do not glorify God by bringing forth the fruits of holiness in their lives. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. If the people of God were only to live with that life and vigor in religion which becomes the children of the King of glory, it would strike the ungodly with such a conviction of the reality of religion, that their consciences could not remain altogether secure. And in the second place when the people of God are lukewarm and formal, they are but little concerned for the welfare of Zion. If in prayer they put up a cold petition for the Church of Christ, that is all—they are but little concerned whether they are answered or not. Now, is not this the case with many here to-day. Are there not many

who are but little grieved for the afflictions of Joseph. How few will we find groaning under a burden of the distresses of their mother, the church.—How few travailing in birth for their ungodly friends and neighbors, until Christ be formed in them the hope of glory. O ye people of God, remember from whence ye have fallen, and repent and do your first works; for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, “*There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel; thou canst not stand before thine enemies until ye put away the accursed thing from among you.*”

3d. Many of the people of God often venture upon the commission of known sins, to the dishonor of God, the polluting of their own souls, and the wounding of the cause of religion. Sometimes by dallying with their lusts, and attending to the wiles and subtle temptations of Satan, they are sometimes shamefully overcome and seduced into sin. This is plain from the instances of David, Peter, and others in ancient times; and from the sad experience of many of God’s people of the present day. The Devil finding the creature off his guard, and knowing what temptations are most likely to succeed, gains upon the soul, inch by inch, till he gains victory for a time, and leads the poor captive in his chains—brings him to defile his conscience—dishonor God, and wound religion. And here the soul remains, until brought to repent and make a new application of the blood of Christ. This lamentable situation is a consequence always of indulging sin—of giving the accursed thing a quiet lodging in the soul. Are there any here to-day who have ventured to commit sin in opposition to the light and convictions of their own consciences? If there be any such, are you living in that condition without repentance? If this be the case, be assured that there is an accursed thing in the midst of you, and you cannot stand before your enemies, until you remove the accursed thing from you, and repent and turn to God.

O believers, you whose consciences tell you that you have committed sin against the clear light of your understanding; think of the horrid aggravations of your guilt. You have crucified the Son of God afresh—you have wounded Christ in the house of his friends—you have injured the most unparalleled love and grace. And is this your kindness to the best of friends? Does the loving Jesus deserve such treatment at your hand? Search diligently for the accursed thing, and remove it from you immediately.

4th. The people of God are often guilty of the heinous crime of unbelief. When they are exercised with grievous afflictions, and the hidings of God’s countenance, they are conscious that they have offended the Holy One of Israel, and provoked him to anger. Guilt lies upon their consciences and they are in darkness upon every side. Internal corruptions rage and rein

force their troops with new recruits from hell, while dreadful storms of temptations, and the fiery darts of Satan, beset them on every hand. Thus placed, they spend their time to little purpose, in gloomy doubts and unbelieving thoughts, calling in question the love of Christ to their souls, denying the work of God upon their hearts, and endeavoring to raze the very foundation of their hopes. Or, if they cannot deny their former experience of the love of Christ to their souls,—if, when looking back, they are obliged to acknowledge that at certain seasons they enjoyed the sweet and comfortable influences of the Holy Spirit. Then says unbelief, you have so abused the matchless love of God, that he will have nothing to do with you—his mercy is now gone forever. And thus the poor soul lies groaning under its burden, listening attentively to the voice of Satan and unbelief, entering the most sinful and ungenerous thoughts concerning the loving Jesus. The call of God to them is such as it was to Joshua:—“*Wherefore liest thou on thy face,*” indulging unbelief in thy heart—spending thy time in gloomy doubts and distressing complaints;—thou hast sinned, thou hast transgressed my covenant—it is thine iniquities which separate between me and thy soul—there is an accursed thing in he midst of thee, therefore it is that thou canst not stand before thine enemies, but fallest an easy prey to their malice. Wherefore dost thou lie upon thy face, arise and search diligently again and again, and never give over the search until you find out the accursed thing which provokes God to absent himself from you. Thou canst not stand before thine enemies until the accursed thing be removed—until every sin which is the cause of God’s displeasure, be taken away.

5th. The people of God are guilty of indulging some of the remains of their old disposition. Although they are divorced from the law as a covenant of works, and are married to Christ by faith, yet as long as they continue in this world, they retain some part of their old legal temper; which inclines them often to place some little dependence upon their own works. When the child of God is called upon to draw near to Christ in the ordinances of divine appointment—to sit at the table of the Lord. O, says the soul, I dare not approach so near to God in my present frame of mind. If my heart was melted and broken for sin,—or if I had such and such heavenly feelings, I could approach. And thus he stays at a distance from Christ, waiting for a proper frame; and preparing himself to come nigh to his Lord. When such is the case, beyond all doubt an accursed thing is indulged in that soul, and unless it be removed, he and God can have no communion with each other. True, no person ought by any means approach the Lord’s table, without some solid scriptural evidence of a saving change of heart, or a vital union **to Christ by faith.** **But to whom should the soul apply for a pro-**

per frame of mind except to Christ himself. First come to Christ and then come to a communion table.

6th. Christians are often guilty of entertaining spiritual pride in their hearts,—a sin most hateful to God and hurtful to the soul. Then the believer cannot be too careful to guard against this enemy. Whenever he enjoys any liberty and freedom in duty, spiritual pride congratulates him. When he enjoys something of the light of God's countenance and feels his love shed abroad in his heart, says this crafty enemy, you are the well beloved of the King of Heaven—your attainments in religion are far above those of many of God's dear children. This is so pleasing to the taste of the carnal heart, that ere he is aware the believer begins to be lifted up with an opinion of his own excellencies; and thus looses his views of the excellency and glory of divine things; and provokes God to leave him to walk in darkness far from his smiling face. But again when the poor creature is groaning under a sense of sin and guilt; and bemoaning his case in bitter complaints to some of his christian friends. Pride whispers, such a minister, and such a pious christian esteem you a dear child of God—your burdens and complaints are considered by them, real marks of living religion. I appeal to the experience of every follower of the meek and lowly Jesus here to day for the truth of these things. How much then are you interested, in strictly examining yourselves and expelling this accursed thing from your heart.

7th. God's people are often guilty of blacksliding—falling from their first love. In the time of their espousals to Christ—when they closed with the gospel plan of salvation, by free grace, their affections were warm and lively in religion; they run with cheerfulness in the paths of obedience to God's commands—their lives and conversation savored of nothing but the vital power of godliness. But alas! how many of them, lamentable to tell, fall from their first love. In a great measure, they lose the secret relish they once had for spiritual and divine things—they grow dull and formal in the duties of religion—sometimes they fall shamefully into sin, and are not only guilty of injuring their own souls, but also of becoming stumbling blocks, over which sinners fall into hell. The faults and blunders of christians are indeed of a bloody nature—they are indeed of a crimson colour, red like scarlet. They are dyed with the blood of souls. The language which the people of God proclaims to the world, by their conduct in falling into gross sin, is such as this: "Hear O ye ungodly and prayerless sinners, we have once by faith beheld the glory and excellency of Christ Jesus; but he is far from being so wonderful, so excellent and lovely, as he is declared in God's word. We have Jesus our heavenly inheritance by faith; but it is so poor and mean, that we are

obliged to get a cup of pleasure from the Devil to complete our happiness." This is the language which the stumbling of christians into sin, proclaims to the careless and ungodly sinners; and thereby thousands of them are hardened in wickedness, and forced to the conclusion, that there is no reality in religion. Let God's backsliding children therefore remember the love of their espousals, and consider from whence they are fallen, and repent and do their first works. Let all backsliders examine carefully and search their hearts; "*for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, there is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel; thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.*" Many other particulars might be mentioned, but it is not necessary. Suffice it to say, that every sin indulged in the heart—every darling lust and flesh-pleasing idol which the soul is prone to exercise—every selfish motive and wrong act in the performance of duty; is an accursed thing, which provokes God to withhold the comforting and quickening influences of his Spirit from the soul in which it is cherished.

II. We promised to shew the necessity of a close examination of the heart, that the accursed thing may be discovered and removed. But for the present this must be deferred. We shall therefore offer a few remarks by way of improvement of what has been said.

This subject calls aloud for serious self-examination from every man and woman here. Christ, the great King and head of the Church, is about to spread his table in this place for the comfort and refreshment of his children. He is about to invite his friends to the feast, to be refreshed upon the rich blessings of the everlasting covenant. Christ himself will be here to view the feast—to see if they are clothed in the garment of his righteousness. And if any dare seat themselves at his table without his garment—who have not put on Christ by faith, they may expect a frown. Yea, and if any of his own children approach his table with the accursed thing in their hearts, they need not expect to see the King's face.

In the doctrinal part of this discourse, I have pointed out six classes who are not only indulging the hated thing, but are also bond-slaves to sin and Satan. These persons are enemies in heart to the great King and Master of the feast; and coming to his table, Judas-like, they will betray the Son of God with a kiss.

Now I call upon you in God's name to give serious answers to the following questions: 1st. Are there here any prayerless persons, those who can rise from their beds in the morning and lie down on them at night, without praying to God in secret—who habitually neglect divine worship in their families? 2. Are there any professors here, who indulge themselves in what is

called little sins—such as promiscuous dancing—taking a dram too much occasionally—profaning God's holy Sabbath, and taking advantage of their neighbor in a bargain, &c.? 3. Are there any who have only a form of religion—who never spent a sad day or sorrowful night for sin, in all their lives—who never had any such discoveries of the divine glory, as drew and attached the soul to Christ, and have never known any thing of enjoying communion with God? 4th. Any who neglect constantly to examine how matters stand between God and their souls; who are afraid to be searched and tried, lest they should see the worst of their case, and be convinced that they were destitute of a saving change of nature? 5th. Any who are building their hopes of heaven and immortal bliss, upon some superficial experiences, which they have had some twenty or thirty years ago; and are now living easy and contented, though they have never been beyond the external round of duty? 6th. Any who are depending upon their supposed graces and enjoyments, their liberty in prayer and good frames of mind: and yet are strangers to a knowledge of the exceeding sinfulness of sin—who have never felt any incessant breathings of the soul after holiness, because of its intrinsic beauty and loveliness? Now if there be here to day, any of these six classes, they may be assured, that they are enemies at heart to the great master of the feast. If they approach his sacred table they will defile his holy ordinance, and eat and drink damnation to themselves. There is an accursed thing in the midst of such persons, even an old accursed false hope, which must be cut off and razed to the very foundation, before God and their souls can be reconciled. In their soul sin reigns predominant and supreme, and they cannot partake of the Lord's supper without incurring the displeasure of God.

But the children of God, also, are called upon to-day, to examine and make strict search for the accursed thing, and to put away from them every dear lust and flesh pleasing idol which is indulged in their hearts. For if they approach the Lord's table, with such vile sins in their hearts, God will be offended and Christ will be wounded afresh.

The believer should search every secret place of his heart, lest the Babylonish garment, or the wedge of gold should remain among their stuff—lest some small sin should be concealed there. For if the accursed thing is not taken away, your souls will enjoy no communion with God; and your spiritual enemies will gather strength and you will not be able to stand before them. Nay, you will turn your back upon them and fall an easy prey to the great adversary.

SERMON XLII.

THE BIBLE A REVELATION FROM HEAVEN.*

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom.” PROV. iii. 13.

WHAT is wisdom? Sheridan says it is “the power of judging rightly.” Metaphysicians pronounce it to be “Knowledge and prudence united”—knowledge to understand the nature, and prudence to direct the proper use of this knowledge.

In a religious sense, wisdom is to *know God and do his will.* “*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his commandments.*” “*Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil that is wisdom; and to depart from evil that is understanding.*”

To know God and do his will, is true happiness. It is the unerring path, leading to everlasting bliss. “*Happy is the man that findeth wisdom.*”

This plainly supposes—1st. That mankind by nature, have not wisdom: consequently, they are destitute of the knowledge of true happiness; for *finding*, signifies the obtaining something which we had not, before.

2d. That, *to find* wisdom and obtain happiness, rational means must be used with diligence and perseverance. Alas! If the knowledge of God and obedience to his will, be true happiness, how few are there that find it. The sons of men are in all the eager pursuit of happiness. And but few find true happiness, because they seek for it *where* it is not to be found. It is sought in the *ball room*—in the *bottle*, and at the *card table*; but it is not *there*. Some seek for it in *riches*—others in *honor, promotion* and *popularity*—but there it is not to be found. Because these are the paths in which God designed it never should be found. The only way is that which God has revealed in his written word.

*Some of the matter contained in this Sermon, is the same with that of the first Sermon in the first volume; but as this is evidently superior to that, the Editor thought it advisable to publish it.

But some say that reason and the light of nature, unassisted by a divine revelation are a sure guide to happiness.

To this I answer, that man in his primitive innocence—when his reason was unimpaired by the fall, no doubt, felt that some farther revelation or communication of the perfections of the infinite God, was necessary to his complete happiness. And I apprehend that no reasonable man will deny, that the human family in their present state are fallen creatures—very different from what they were when they came from the hands of their Creator. And if this be the case, fallen and depraved reason cannot be a guide to true happiness.

But say our deistical friend—Reason and the light of nature, teach us that there is a God—one true and Eternal God, a being of all possible goodness and perfection. I grant they teach us that there must be a God or First Cause of all things: but whether there be one or twenty Gods, reason cannot tell. And the Deist is indebted to the Bible for this and every genuine truth, which his system contains.

Trace the history of the earliest ages of the world, and for hundreds of years, you will find no nation or people confirmed in the belief of the existence of one God, save the Jews, and they obtained it by revelation.

The Egyptians were a civilized nation—and for more than two thousand years, a respectable and important empire. Among them, the knowledge of letters, Mathematics, Philosophy and other Sciences, originated. But did enlightened reason inform them that there was but one God? It did not. They had their gods Osiris and Isis—worshipped oxen, dogs and cats—and even leeks and onions.

Afterwards Greece and Rome were the wonders of the world. They were renowned for wisdom and eloquence—for political, military and scientific knowledge. Their learned men immortalized their names, by philosophic researches. Did their refined and enlightened reason teach them, the existence of one God? No. They had hundreds, and for aught I know, thousands of gods. But farther—Did reason and the light of nature teach them, that their gods were good beings, possessed of moral excellency? Read their poets and observe the obscene debaucheries of Jupiter, Apollo and Venus; the thefts of Mercury—the cruelty and injustice of Jupiter in dethroning Saturn his father, and sending him to hell, while he usurped his power as supreme god. Then, how does it come to pass, that in the present day, reason and the light of nature can so infallibly discover that there is one God, and He a being of infinite goodness and perfection—since man, from age to age, for thousands of years, with all their wisdom and improvement, so grossly erred? The cause is this:—Few Deists can be found, who have not had some

religious education. Their fathers or grandfathers believed in Christianity, and held the Bible in high veneration. And although they reject it as fable, they are indebted to it for every genuine truth, contained in their system.

From these considerations it is evident, that reason, in its fallen and depraved state, can never lead us to true happiness, or teach the knowledge of God and his will concerning us. The happy man that finds wisdom, or the wise man that finds true happiness, has a surer guide—which is nothing less than a revelation from God himself.

In speaking farther from this subject I shall attempt—

I. To shew that a revelation from heaven is necessary to lead man to true happiness.

II. That the Bible has all the features and evidences of such a revelation.

III. Answer some objections, made by the deist, against the Bible as a revelation from God.

I. Shew that a revelation from Heaven is necessary.

To illustrate this proposition, we will state particulars, in which the christian and deist agree.

1st. There is a God—the eternal first cause of all things existing—the Sovereign and Almighty Ruler of the Universe.

2nd. That he is possessed of every possible perfection and excellency.

3d. That a world exists—which is, and has been inhabited by a succession of rational beings.

4th. That God, the First Cause created this world, and gave being to all things existing upon it.

5th. That as God is a Being of infinite goodness, he must have created man in his own image; i. e. a good being, free from vice and moral evil. This every christian believes; and as many deists are men of education; and strong mental powers. I apprehend they will not deny it.

6th. If man came, originally from his Maker, upright and holy, it must appear evident, in the view of reason and common sense, that he is now fallen and degenerate; and consequently, must have lost his original rectitude and purity. This is believed by every christian and I am confident, that no reasonable and sensible deist, who thinks there is an essential difference between virtue, and vice, can deny it. Therefore, I conclude, that the christian and deist are agreed in this and the other particulars mentioned.

But that the necessity of a revelation from heaven may appear clearly evident, we will prove the fall and depravity of the human race.

That mankind are degenerate creatures, that they have lost their original rectitude and purity, will appear—

1st. From the vice and great wickedness which every where abound in the world. Witness the falsehood, the deceit, the cheating and fraudulent measures universally practised in accumulating property, and depriving men of their rights. The dissipation, swinish drunkenness, obscene debauchery, profane swearing, and horrid blasphemies.—The idleness, prodigality and extravagance, by which men destroy their characters, their estates, their health, their families, their lives and their immortal souls. To these we may add, the rage, the malice, the private injuries, slanders, oppositions, thefts, murders, adulteries, and the evil disputings and contentious, which every where prevail.

2nd. Another evidence of the fallen and depraved condition of man, may be drawn from the necessary establishment of civil government, and penal laws to restrain offenders, defend men's lives and property, and prevent the world from becoming a perfect hell. To which are attached civil officers, courts of justice, and places of punishment, viz: Judges, Sheriffs, court houses, jails, penitentiaries, pillories, whipping-posts and gibbets.

3d. Again—militia establishments, armies, fleets, artillery, swords, muskets, bayonets, and other instruments of destruction, necessary for individuals and nations, in the defence of their personal, and civil and religious rights; are another monument of the degeneracy of man.

4th. Survey the world through all ages and generations back to the earliest period, and what is the history of mankind, but a narration of wrongs, cruelties, murders and debauchery—an account of war, bloodshed, carnage and slaughter—then say, is man the creature that he was, when he came from the hands of a pure and holy God:

5th. Another evidence of man's fall, is the base subjection of his reason and mental powers, to the vicious appetites of animal nature.

How common is it to see men of sense and education, possessed of superior talents, capable of serving their country in the field or in the councils with dignity and respectability, devoting themselves as slaves and dupes to their filthy appetites and propensities! See them degrading their reason below the brutes by intoxication—gradually sinking into contempt, poverty, and disgrace, by this abominable practice, until they become nuisances to society. And others of equal talents, render themselves odious by the lowest and most hateful grades of debauchery.

Now tell me, did man come from the hands of his Creator at first, in this disgraceful form? Or can reason in disgraceful servitude to animal propensities, be a guide to true happiness?

6th. Look also at the evils incident to human nature; loss of property, disappointment in the pursuit of laudable objects, the dearest earthly comforts snatched away, and opening wide avenues of sorrow and distress: destructive rains, storms and tempests; droughts, sickly seasons, epidemic and contagious diseases, afflictions and death. These are accidents to which men of every rank and situation are liable. And what can incredulous reason conjecture them to be, but clear evidences of man's fall, and the manifestations of God's displeasure to sin? Truly man, without a comfortable hope of a happy immortality, is a most miserable creature!

7th. But there are three great evidences of man's fall and depravity, pointed out by divine revelation, which stand imperishable monuments in proof of this truth. 1st. That woman should bring forth her offspring in unutterable pain; 2nd. that man should eat bread by the sweat of his brow; and 3rd. that the earth, instead of yielding spontaneously those fruits necessary to man's comfort and support, should bring forth thorns and noxious productions.

I have stated a variety of facts which reason and the light of nature, as well as divine revelation, acknowledge to be incontrovertible truths; and I am confident, that so far, the sensible, rational deist, and the christian are agreed.

Now, I propose these questions: upon what principles can depraved, offending man be pardoned and reconciled to God, who must be justly offended? How can a holy and just God pardon sin, and at the same time maintain the honor of his law, and the dignity of his government? How can his justice, as well as mercy, be glorified in the pardon and salvation of guilty offending sinners? How can the polluted sinner be made holy, and be so effectually cured of the malignant moral disease, sin, as to become the object of the love of God—to enjoy fellowship and communion with him upon earth—and be forever blessed in the enjoyment of him in the future state? Can reason tell? Can the light of nature suggest a plan? No.

Here the wisest and most learned deist must be silent—fallen and depraved reason, must either acknowledge the necessity of a revelation from beaven—or regard the Deity as an unholy, impure being—who sees *little* or no evil in sin—and has no more respect for the honor and dignity of his law, than the sinner who tramples it under his feet.

Here I assert that reason acknowledges the necessity of a divine revelation. There is a secret witness in the conscience of every deist, when death and eternity stare him in the face, that such a religion as that revealed in the Bible is necessary to make him happy.

And as a farther proof that reason and the light of nature, do teach the necessity of a revelation from God, we will mention the example of Socrates, the celebrated Grecian philosopher, related by Dr. Samuel Clarke, an eminent clergyman of England, in his "Treatise on natural and revealed religion." A few days before Socrates' death, one of his pupils paid him a visit. In his last conversation with him, he desired Socrates to give him some farther information upon a subject, which he had often conversed with him on, viz: How, or by what means the Deity would deliver mankind from the distempers of their minds. Socrates, after stating the reasons why he thought such a way would be discovered to men, tells the young man, that he could conceive of no other means by which it could be effected, but one; which was, that the Deity would send some extraordinary person into the world to teach the knowledge of his will, and to point out this way of deliverance. But who this extraordinary person was, or when he would come, he could not tell.

The light of nature acknowledges the necessity of divine revelation. But how the sinner is pardoned, reconciled to God, and prepared for eternal glory, the revelation from God must declare.

Well, that despised book, the Bible, unveils the mystery, and opens a door of hope to a dying world. It informs you that "*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" It tells us that, "*In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.*" "*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the form of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,*" and that too "*the just for the unjust.*" "*He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*" He gave "*his life as a ransom for many.*" This despised book informs you, how the healing virtue of Christ's merits and death are to be applied to your soul, to deliver you from the damning nature of sin; and how you are to be made holy and prepared for the enjoyment of the heavenly state. It declares that you must be converted by the power and agency of the Spirit of God, and renewed after the image of Christ; that God will *write his law upon your hearts*—that he will *put his spirit within you*, and *cause you to walk in his statutes*—that you shall *grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, until you are ripe for heaven and eternal blessedness. It declares, that you shall have the comfortable witness of this divine change—that the *Spirit of*

This exercise is entirely rational: our own experience teaches us, that there is a tender sympathy in human nature, by which good men are often affected with the miseries and distresses of their fellow creatures. Is it strange, then, that christians, who have felt the terrors of an ungodly state, and who have clear views of the narrow escape which they have made from the jaws of damnation, should be burdened and painfully distressed for their friends and neighbors—whose wretched and deplorable state they behold—and whom they see careless and unconcerned upon the trembling brink of hell? But it is in accordance with scriptural record. The prophet Jeremiah describes this very exercise: *“Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child; wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?”* Isaiah speaks of this exercise as common to all the people of God.—*“For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.”* By Zion, we are doubtless to understand all the children of God—all his spiritual Israel: and by her *travailing*, nothing else than the painful anxiety which the people of God feel for the salvation of poor, lost sinners. The apostle Paul tells us, that he had this exercise himself—*“I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accurs'd from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh”*—*“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.”*

5th. Many of these people pretend to act faith for others, and will tell us they receive comfortable answers to their prayers for the conversion and salvation of other persons.

There is a variety of examples in scripture, and particularly in the New Testament of persons, who acted faith for others, for their children and servants, and received answers to their prayers for them. I might mention the woman of Canaan for her daughter—the centurion for his servant,—and many other instances. But we are told that these persons did not so much as believe that Christ was the Saviour of the world. All they had to believe was, that he was able to work the miracle.

Christ gives a very different account of the faith of the Centurion.—*“Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”* not in John the Baptist—not in Mary, or Peter, or John, or in any of the apostles. But these persons acted faith only for temporal blessings,—no one can show scripture for acting faith for spiritual blessings for others. Strange, indeed, that the compassionate Jesus who came to purchase and bestow spiritual blessings upon the sons of men, and never sent any one away disappointed, that came to him for temporal blessings, shoud yet deny spiritual blessings to poor sinners, when his praying children ask them in faith: God’s word expressly

supports the doctrine.—Hannah received an answer to her prayers, and “*went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.*” Good old Simeon received an answer to his prayers; for it is said, that “*it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ,*” John asserts the doctrine.—“*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.*”

6th. There is another thing which I don’t like. This strange leaping and skipping about, when in apparent ecstacies of joy— which is called by some, dancing David’s dance.

If designed and voluntary dancing were introduced as an ordinance of the church, your objection would have weight. The practice would be truly absurd and ridiculous. But such is not the case. There is not one motion of the body attending this exercise which is voluntary. This dance, if dance it may be called, is entirely involuntary, and produced altogether by extraordinary and overpowering impressions on the mind. The person, filled, as it were, brim-full of spiritual joy and comfort, in ecstacies of delight and wonder, skips and leaps about, scarce knowing what he is doing. This is all the dance that attends the exercise. And plain precedents of such dancing as this can be produced from the word of God. When the ark of God was brought home, such was the inexpressible joy and satisfaction of David, that he “*danced before the Lord with all his might.*”

The lame man, who was cured by Peter and John at the gate of the Temple called Beautiful, is another example of such a dance: and this was the effect of the great joy and comfort of his mind; “*Leaping up, he stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.*”

7th. But there is another thing objectionable. A wheeling over, and other strange agitations of the body.”

This wheeling over and those other agitations of the body, have nothing in them, either physically or morally, evil. I would ask the prejudiced mind, if any command of God is broken by these exercises. I presume none at all. If no command is broken by these exercises, and they have nothing in them, physically or morally, evil, then, your objections are trifling, and groundless, and you have no reason to be offended by what is innocent and harmless. To ascertain whether persons thus agitated are under the influence of the Divine Spirit, is to find out the views and exercises of their minds at such times; and if they are rational and scriptural, it is a matter of no consequence.

Evangelists; then read the history of its destruction written by Flavius Josephus, an unbelieving Jew; and the event shews the accomplishment of the prophecy.

I would earnestly request every candid inquirer after truth, for further light upon this subject, to read with unprejudiced mind Bishop Newton's "Dissertation on the Prophecies."

3d. It is very clear that the Bible is the revelation of God: because all its commands and precepts are founded on the reason and propriety of things. Look at the law of the ten commandments, given at Mount Sinai. Can any thing be more reasonable, just and proper? When summed up in two tables; the first is, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind.*" Now let reason and the light of nature speak—is it not right and fit in the nature of things, that we should love infinite excellence, beauty and perfection with all our hearts and with all our souls? The second table of the divine law, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*" Look at the explanation given of this—given by the Lord Jesus Christ, the prophets, and the apostles; and is any thing more reasonable—better calculated to promote the general good of society? "*What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God?*" "*Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*"—That is, treat every man's character, person and property, as you would have him treat your own. Fulfil all your contracts, and pay all your debts, as you would that men should pay you. Do good to all men as you have opportunity, This, my friends, is the religion of Jesus: these are the despised principles of Christianity.

4th. God is the author of the Bible, because its doctrines are calculated to suppress vice and wickedness, and promote virtue and happiness.

The Bible denounces the most dreadful penalties against the wicked—declaring the wrath and curse of God, the eternal pains and torments of hell, as the just desert of every sin of thought word or action. But promises the smiles and favor of God, the consolations of the Spirit in the present, world and eternal and indescribable blessedness in the world to come: as the reward of virtue and holiness. "*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?* Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor Idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." "*Now the works of the flesh are manifest; which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness,*

revellings and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, they that do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God." "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

But on the contrary,—Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." The "righteous" shall enter "*into life eternal.*" They shall be ever with the Lord. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Such is the religion of Jesus—such are the doctrines of the Bible—and what harm can they do the souls or bodies of men—to individuals or societies?

5th. The Bible will appear to be a revelation from God, if we consider the purity, holiness and spirituality of its principles and precepts. No system of religion can be compared with it in this respect. The doctrines of the Bible, the religion of Jesus, give laws to the heart. They lay down rules and regulations to direct the most secret thoughts and emotions of the mind. The Bible declares, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment." When God shall judge the secret thoughts of men. It extends to every wanton look, every immodest thought and covetous desire. It forbids all anger, wrath, ill will and revenge; and requires a peaceable, mild, loving and forgiving spirit and temper of mind. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." "And now ye also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth." "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, even so do ye." "See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men."

Look at that blessed command delivered by our Lord in his sermon on the mount.—"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." And see it enforced by the dying example of its divine author when hanging

on the cross and struggling in the agonies of death. Hear him praying for his murderers—for his cruel persecutors, who were mocking his agonies and making sport of his dying groans. “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”

This is the despised religion of Jesus—what evil has it done?

But farther—The word of God requires that every act to be done, not only to be materially or substantially good as to the action itself, but also, that it be performed, from pure and upright motives, and from the highest and holiest purposes of love to God.—“If ye love me, keep my commandments.” “Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

It requires you to be perfect—to be holy as God is holy—and perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect—to walk with God and to keep consciences “void of offence towards God and men.”

6th. The Bible manifests itself to be a revelation from God, inasmuch as its doctrines and precepts point out a way to happiness far preferable to any prescribed by other systems.

View the social and relative duties which it imposes upon mankind in every station and circumstance of life—every rational, sensible deist acknowledges they are calculated to promote the happiness of mankind. It requires all men to be good citizens, loyal, faithful and dutiful subjects to civil government. “Render therefore, unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s.” “Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear: honor to whom honor.” “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.” “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be, are ordained of God.” “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.”

It requires all magistrates and officers of government to be men of truth, fearing God and hating covetousness; and that they should exercise the power with which God has invested them for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

It requires all servants to be humble, faithful, dutiful and obedient: not as eye servants, but performing their duty to their masters, as to the Lord. And even to submit with patience to harsh and tyranical treatment for Christ’s sake.

It requires of masters to be kind, tender and humane to their servants; not exacting more of them than is just and proper.

It requires parents to be tender, strict, prudent and affectionate to their children; bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

It requires husbands to love their wives as their own souls; to cherish and comfort them; and treat them with all tenderness: and it requires of wives to love, respect and honor their husbands.—“Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.” “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church.” “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.”

It requires all men to be just and faithful, kind and charitable, loving, affectionate and forgiving one to another. Now if every man and woman would be governed and directed by these rules and precepts, how happy would the world be!

The religion of Jesus leads to true happiness even in this life; for it requires us to have consciences “*void of offence toward God and toward men.*” And what a source of happiness does this afford? With what heroic boldness can he whose conscience is void of offence toward God and men, appear in every company, and in every place? He is not afraid to face the world, and what is more, he is not afraid to face death, or to stand at the judgment of God.

The religion of Jesus leads to true happiness; for it points out the only way, by which man can be at peace with God, and hold sweet fellowship and communion with him. It fills his heart with such heavenly comfort and unspeakable joy, that he can rejoice in tribulation, and be happy in the most extreme afflictions; and finally it gives him a rational and substantial hope of eternal life—of immortal glory—and of incorruptible and never fading blessedness in the heavenly state.

III. Answer some objections made by the deist against the Bible as a revelation from God.

1st. Says the deist, the Bible cannot be a revelation from God, because it contains a history of wrongs, injuries, bloodshed and slaughter; and most horrid acts of impiety. To this, I answer, the histories of the Bible are accounts of matters of fact; and as a history it records the actions of wicked and depraved of mankind. If it records truth—it must relate actions of the most base and abominable description. If this objection be made against the authenticity of the scriptures, it must also be made against the truth of *all* history; for every history of the world which records matters of fact, must be a narrative of war, bloodshed, cruelty, and most atrocious acts of wickedness. But no candid man of sense who is acquainted with the Bible, dare say; that it recommends these base actions that it records as a

history—as virtuous and worthy of imitation. But on the contrary, they are condemned as actions to be abhorred and detested.

6th. How will you reconcile the conduct of Moses and Joshua in destroying the Canaanites, and even putting their tender infants to death, to the justice and goodness of God? This the Bible justifies,—and does not nature recoil at it? Can you reconcile with justice and equity, the conduct of a Judge and jury in finding a notorious murderer guilty and condemning him to death? Does nature recoil at the sheriff's conduct when he takes him to the place of execution, and puts him to death? I apprehend you think this all right. And if the righteous Judge of all the earth, sentences the nations of Canaan to destruction, and sends Moses and Joshua commissioned to execute his just judgment upon them for their wickedness and unheard of abominations, will you not allow that it is right for the Sovereign of the Universe thus to act? And if he commands the Israelites to destroy their infants, is it contrary to his justice and goodness? Has not he who gave them existence, an unquestionable right to take it away in what manner he pleases?

When Lisbon was sunk by an earthquake in 1775, how many hundred infants were swallowed up? When in the reign of Titus, Herculaneum was overwhelmed by an eruption from Mount Vesuvius; and when Catanea was destroyed by an eruption from Ætna, how many thousand infants were crushed to death? Was not this the hand of God? Then is it not as consistent with justice and goodness to command the Israelites to put them to death, as to commission earthquakes and volcanoes to do so?

3rd. But the Bible contains so many things obscene and immodest, which are unfit to be read in polite and genteel company—therefore it cannot be a revelation from God. I acknowledge there are some things in the Bible improper to be read in public. But the obscenity is not in the Bible; it is in the polluted minds of depraved men. I can shew you many things in the institutions of nature, altogether unfit for conversation in genteel company; yet they are by no means obscene or immodest. Examine a treatise on anatomy or midwifery, and you will find many things in the very laws of nature, which are improper subjects for conversation in public.

Then, the obscenity lies altogether in the minds of immodest men. And your objection would condemn natural religion with as much force, as it would divine revelation.

4th. The Bible records many actions of the most eminent saints, which are base and immoral: as Noah's drunkenness, Lot's incest, David's murder and adultery, Peter's perjury and denying his Lord. How then can the religion of the Bible be of God?

If the Bible approbated such conduct, and recommended it as worthy of imitation, your objection would be good. But so far from approving such conduct, the Bible every where condemns and detests it; and, in some instances, records their repentance and bitter humiliation for such backslidings from God.

These faults in the lives of saints, are related for our alarm; that we might watch and pray, and guard against temptation. And their repentance is mentioned, for the encouragement of penitent backsliders, who may see from plain examples and matters of fact, that there is forgiveness with God for all who will confess and forsake their sins.

5th. But many eminent saints lived and died in the sin of polygamy. Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon and others had a plurality of wives. How is this to be reconciled to the purity of the religion of the Bible?

In the early ages, for want of sufficient light to understand the will of God, polygamy was allowed. It was not known to be criminal, until Christ the true light came into the world, and shewed men the mind and will of God. For this reason some things were excusable in early ages, which would be unpardonable under the dispensation of the gospel.

6th. The christian religion cannot be of God; for it has been the source of more villainy, rascality, oppression, and bloodshed than any thing else. Witness the conduct of the Roman Catholic church for eight or nine centuries. My dear friends, the religion of the Bible and the conduct of the Roman church, are two, very different. Genuine christianity differs as widely from the church of Rome, as the most chaste, amiable and virtuous lady, from the vilest prostitute. Read the Bible with a candid and unprejudiced mind, and you will find that the abominations of the church of Rome, were foretold by the apostle Paul. *“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of Devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with an hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.”* He speaks of these abominations as a time when the *“man of sin.”* should be revealed, with all the deceit of unrighteousness; *“the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”* The church of Rome is spoken of by John, under the figure of *“the great whore,”* *“with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”* Read these predictions and Newton’s *“Dissertation on the prophecies,”* and you will see they apply to that church. Can her

abominations with any degree of property be charged upon the pure doctrines of christianity; when the first preachers of the gospel, foretold them as a falling off or departure from its doctrines?

When Constantine the great, established the christian religion, he permitted none to fill offices of honor and profit but christians, and at the same time conferred high pensions and honors on the clergy.

This laid the foundation for apostacy: wicked ungodly men called themselves christians, to obtain preferment; and entered the ministry for the purpose of acquiring the riches of this world. And now, suppose that the constitution of the United States, and of the several state governments permitted none but those professing christianity, to fill any post in our civil or military departments—would not thousands of wicked men, and many *deists* too, assume the name of christian, to obtain offices? And suppose two thousand dollars a year, were, by the government conferred upon every preacher of the gospel—are there not numbers of wicked and ungodly men and those who *now* call themselves *deists*, also, who would turn their attention to the study of divinity, for the sake of their salary? And the inevitable consequence would be, the corruption and abuse of the religion of Jesus Christ. I would now ask—can common sense charge these abuses, so contrary to the spirit of true religion, as a reproach to genuine christianity? Surely not.

Honor is one of the noblest principles that ever existed in the human bosom. But can the perpetration of a dishonorable act, under the cloak of honor—render genuine honor mean and contemptible? For example—*Duelling* will be allowed by every man of reflection to be dishonorable, for it is repugnant both to the laws of God and man, and is attended with consequences which should make it infamous and disgraceful. A man for a small offence will murder his neighbor, and send his soul without preparation into the presence of its Maker, to be doomed to eternal wo. He will make a destitute widow; a family of children, helpless orphans. All this mischief is done under the pretext of honor. But is there any man so irrational as to declare, that therefore *true* honor is a base principle?

It is our boast in this land of liberty, where the rights of men are understood, that ours is the best system of laws in the world. But will those many speculations, frauds, and acts of villainy, contrary to the nature and design of the law, but committed under the pretext of law, be regarded as a reproach upon the spirit of our laws? When an attorney for the sake of a high fee, under colour of justice, screens the notorious offenders, robbers and murderers from punishment, does the law become abominable? Is it the source of all crime? Neither can the

conduct of hypocrites, be charged as a reproach upon true and genuine christianity.

7th. The Bible contains a number of inexplicable mysteries, which reason cannot comprehend. Therefore I must reject it as a fable. If there are mysteries in the Bible, which, reason cannot comprehend—yet this is not a good objection to the truth of it. God himself is incomprehensible; and if the christian religion is a revelation from God it must bear his likeness and also incomprehensible.

The religion of nature is full of mysterious wonders which reason cannot comprehend. The eternal duration of God—a Supreme First Cause—*uncaused*, independent of any *cause*. Is not this a mystery, beyond your comprehension? Let your thoughts, run back, if possible ten thousand times ten thousand centuries—and you are then, as far from the commencement of his existence, as the present moment.

Infinite space is another great mystery. Reason cannot comprehend, nor yet deny it. Were you to travel one hundred thousand millions of leagues from this spot, you would be no farther from its centre, and no nearer to its circumference than when you started. The diurnal motion of the globe of our earth is a mystery. It revolves on its axes every twenty four hours, yet we never see it move. In its annual motion, it passes round its orbit in three hundred and sixty five days, the semi-diameter of which is more than ninety millions of miles, and yet we perceive not its motion, notwithstanding we move with surprising velocity.

We are a mystery to ourselves, we cannot comprehend the constitution of our own beings. How a material body—and an immortal soul, which is an immaterial spirit, are united together, reason cannot tell.

But, says the deist, I have no soul. There is no future state or immortality.

This sentiment strikes at the foundation of all government and civil society. If there is no *hereafter* or future existence, the greatest villain, the most confirmed scoundrel, who can cheat, defraud, rob or steal, and heap up wealth and take all the pleasure that the world can afford, is the happiest man, if he can only elude the lash of the civil law. All the happiness he expects is in this world—and it is all he desires. He fears only the laws of the country.

But the secret dictates of conscience in every man's breast, take part with the religion of the Bible, and tell him that he has a soul—that there is a future state—and that he must give an account after death for the *deeds done in the body*.

But perhaps the deist denies that there is in the mind any such principle as conscience; that it is only a prejudice arising from education.

This sentiment also tends to unhinge society. It lets loose man's depraved disposition, to the commission of all manner of wickedness. At one blow it destroys all the force of an oath. If man has no conscience, what is the use of oaths? He has nothing to bind him to truth. When I take an oath, I call God to witness, who searches the heart, that what I declare is the truth. My conscience tells me I declare not the truth, that I must answer for it at the bar of the all-seeing God who cannot be deceived, and be punished for it after death.

I now appeal to every deist upon earth, if the Bible is not the strongest bond of civil government.—Does it not offer the most powerful obligations to bind mankind together? Is it not the only system upon earth that leads to happiness in time and through eternity?

When I began this discourse, I intended to have answered a variety of other objections. But the subject is so copious, that it must be omitted at present.

THE
DANGEROUS AND DESTRUCTIVE CONSEQUENCES
ATTENDING THE
USE OF SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS.

I WOULD introduce this subject in the language which the celebrated Dr. Rush makes use of upon another occasion, viz: If an inhabitant of our world should go to a neighboring planet, and should tell the inhabitants of that place, that there was an article in the world he left, in the highest repute among all ranks and descriptions of men; that it was manufactured with the greatest care and industry; that it was a principal article of trade and commerce among all nations; that it was to be found in almost every house, and frequently used by almost every person; that it was presented by every man to his friend and neighbor as a token of his love and regard; that it formed a very material part of all banquets, feasts, and entertainments—yet, that it was destructive to the health, to the morals, to the bodies, to the souls, to the characters, and to the estates of those that use it; that it destroyed the peace and happiness of individuals, of families, societies and neighborhoods; that it was an inlet and procuring cause of broils, discords, quarrels and mischiefs of every description; that it brings men of sense, of genius and importance to mere cyphers in the world, men of character and respectability to be objects of contempt, and men of wealth and property to be beggars and vagabonds; that it reduces whole families from the summit of wealth and affluence to poverty, rags and wretchedness;—in a word, that it degrades men of rationality below the character of the brutes:—the person bringing such tidings would be banished from society as a common liar because such information would appear so irrational and incredible. Yet every man of reason and reflection must acknowledge, that this is a true picture of that poisonous, destructive article, which we call spirituous liquors, which has been the source of so much mischief, and so many deadly evils to the world of mankind.

It is true, the advocates for the use of the ardent spirits, particularly such of them as are reputed sober, temperate men, will plead for the moderate use of them, and tell you in the language of the apostle, 1. Tim. iv. ch. 4. v. that every creature of God is good, and none to be refused when sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

I confess I do believe spirituous liquors, physically considered, to be an innocent thing; that there is no moral evil in them. The same may be said of a sword, a bayonet, of a rifle bullet, or a cannon ball. Let them alone, and they will injure nobody; but apply them to their proper use, and they are instruments of death. So spirituous liquor, innocent as the thing may be in itself, the use of it is ruin and destruction to body and soul. I suppose if ardent spirits were never taken but when they were sanctified by the word of God and prayer, or if no man was ever to lift the bottle or glass to his mouth, but when he felt himself in the spirit of Christ, and acting under the influence of that gospel command, 1. Cor. 10 ch. xiii. v: "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," no man would ever be drunk; and it is more than probable that spirituous liquors would be seldom or never used. But alas! how few of our sober and temperate men can appeal to God, and say, I never drank a drop, nor took a drink of grog, but when it was sanctified by the word of God and prayer! I never lifted the bottle or the glass to my lips, but when I did it to the glory of God, and with a design to glorify him. In opposition to all the arguments that can be advanced, in favor of the use of ardent spirits, the following considerations are submitted, which must have due weight upon the minds of all men of serious reflection, and especially such as are sincere Christians.

1st. That spirituous liquors have been a source of mischief, destruction and misery to the human race ever since they were invented and brought into use. Do you hear of a broil, a riot, or bloody quarrel struck up in a public company, men of rationality beating and tearing one another like dogs, their eyes blackened, their nose bleeding, their limbs broken or disabled, their heads mashed, and their bodies bruised? Inquire into the spring and moving cause of it, and at once you will find it is too much whiskey. Do you hear of a man found upon the highway frozen to death? or a man having his brains beat out, or his neck broken by a fall from his horse?—and you are sure to hear that the unhappy cause which was too much whiskey. Do you see a man coming home to his family, his wife trembling with the terror of a slave, his children and servants struck with horror and consternation, or flying the plantation for fear of unmerciful abuse, as though a murderous savage or an infernal fury had made his appearance? Examine into the cause of all this

confusion and disturbance, and you will find it is whiskey—the head of the family has come home drunk. Do you see a man that once possessed thousands, once a man of credit, a man of property, a man that filled offices of profit and respectability, now going in rags, an object of contempt, and a nuisance to the society of mankind? Examine into the cause of this melancholy change, and you will find it is whiskey; the intemperate use of ardent spirits was the inlet or procuring cause of his gambling, of his neglecting business, his bad trades, and foolish bargains, which all terminate in his ruin; and now when his all is gone, his only refuge and comfort is whiskey, when often he has to beg ninepence before he can get it. Do you hear of an honorable professor of Christianity blundering, falling into sin, bringing the cause of God into reproach, and thereby opening the mouths of the uncircumcised in heart to blaspheme the precious name of Jesus?—and for the most part you will find the cause of it to be whiskey. For, I think, it will be found, upon examination, that nine-tenths of the reproaches that the professors of Christianity bring upon religion is by the intemperate use of spirituous liquors.

2nd. Another awful consideration which should have a solemn weight, at least upon the minds of serious professors, is, that spirituous liquors are an article that the devil has embraced and appropriated in a very great degree for his own purposes, and for his own use, to the promotion of his kingdom in the world, to the destruction of the souls of men, and the injury and disgrace of the Christian religion.

It is impossible to point out one article or commodity in the world, that is and has been the source of so much mischief, that is an inlet to so many temptations, and that so completely places them beyond hope, beyond recovery, and beyond every possible remedy. With the greater part of the human race, ardent spirits is the most suitable bait that the devil can present to ensnare them, and to lead them on to perpetrate the most enormous crimes.

In evidence of the truth of this, let us take a serious view of the conduct of hundreds that attend our courts, elections and general musters, and who frequent balls, horse races and other places of public concourse. Take a view of their dreadful effects on individuals, families and collected bodies of men: these mischiefs and dreadful, destructive consequences taken into view, I would ask every serious professor of religion, are ardent spirits a blessing or a curse to the world? are they a blessing or a curse to the church? Whether does the bottle and the glass, the whiskey and the grog in the drinking hall of a tavern, look most suitable before a company of the humble followers of the blessed Jesus, or before a company of profane ungodly sinners? The

answer—I apprehend the answer will be easy, but my present business is to point out the dangers that attend the use of ardent spirits, and the dreadful consequences that frequently proceed from the use of them.

And here I shall pass over their ruinous effects upon the bodies and constitutions of men, as this has been treated in a learned and masterly manner by one of the most eminent and respectable physicians in the United States. I shall only consider the effects of them as they are pernicious to the morals and destructive to the souls of men.

1st. The dangers that attend the moderate and temperate use of ardent spirits, and

1st. The most moderate and temperate use of them naturally leads to a habit, and this habit for the most part, terminates in drunkenness and intemperance. It has been a received principle in the world that spirituous liquors taken in bitters in the morning, are a preservative to health, and a preventive to disease, especially in sickly seasons. Hence it has become a practice in the most decent families to take a bitter dram in the morning for the purpose of health, and perhaps to repeat it again before breakfast to create an appetite; again, when a man comes in fatigued from hard labor, to take a glass of spirits or a drink of grog to refresh his body and raise his animal spirits; again, if a friend or a neighbor comes to his house, as a token of his friendship, he presents him with the bottle and the glass, and for sake of good fellowship, he must taste it with his friend. By a frequent, though a temperate use of it in this manner, a man will contract a liking to the taste of it. After some time, he will feel an anxiety for it at the particular times that he has accustomed himself to take it; presently when his bottle or his keg is empty, he will feel the same longing anxiety after it, that a smoker or chewer will feel when his tobacco runs out; and hence, he will as soon as possible, provide himself with a new supply. In such a use of ardent spirits as this, the habit grows up insensibly, and it is ten thousand to one, that in the course of fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five years, and probably a great deal sooner, this habit will ripen into swinish drunkenness and intemperance. The world at present abounds with dismal examples of this kind. There are, no doubt, hundreds that pass for sober, temperate men, that are living in this moderate, but daily use of spirituous liquors. Were you to tell them that in the space of twenty years, they would be common drunkards, they would reject the idea with horror, and would be ready in the language of Hazaël to the prophet, 2 Kings, viii. ch. 13 v.—“Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this?”—when, perhaps, in less time, they will fall a prey to this soul undoing habit.

2nd. Another danger that attends even the temperate use of

spirituous liquors, is, that a man, though cautious and prudent, yet if he[¶] accustoms himself to the use of spirituous liquors, is liable at one time or another to be overtaken, and to be ensnared in the Devil's net; or, in other words, he is liable, at one time or another, to be intoxicated.

If we consider the different seasons of heat and cold—the different circumstances that a man may be in, and the different situations of the human body, in which ardent spirits may be used, we will find that their effects will be as different. A man, when he is young, in the prime and vigor of life, when his nervous system is strong and his constitution is sound, may use spirituous liquors, as he supposes with temperance, without feeling the intoxicating power.—When he is advanced in years, in the decline of life, his constitution broken and his nervous system weakened, the same quantity of spirits will produce intoxication. A man, in perfect health, receiving his food in proper season, and engaged in laborious bodily exercise, may drink a quantity of spirits without receiving any sensible injury; yet when his body is in an enfeebled state, weakened by sickness, the same quantity of spirits will intoxicate him, especially if taken upon an empty stomach. Again, a man, in a warm day, in the exercise of hard labor, with a lively perspiration, may drink a quantity of spirits without intoxication, when the same quantity taken in a cold day and upon an empty stomach, would be extremely injurious. From what has been said, we may plainly see that it is a dangerous matter, (especially for professors of religion) to touch or concern with spirituous liquors. It is, in fact, to dabble with the Devil's bait, and to run the fatal risk, at one time or another, of swallowing his hook.

Many lamentable instances might be brought forward to illustrate melancholy truth, but I shall mention only one at this time, viz: the circumstance of a man, now living, who, for the space of twenty-four years, made an open and reputable profession of the religion of Jesus, without the smallest blot or stain upon his moral and religious character, and for the space of eighteen years of that time, he uniformly supported the character of a useful, zealous minister of the gospel. On a cold day, and with an empty stomach, being in a low state of health—but a short time recovered from the bilious fever—he rode in company with two wicked men, and unhappily drinking with them at different times, the liquor had a sudden effect, and the consequence was, he was shamefully intoxicated, to the great reproach of religion to the wounding of his own soul, and to the hardening of the wicked and ungodly. After spending some weeks in a state of anguish and distress, almost comparable to the torments of the damned, he at length obtained some small glimmering views of the glory and sufficiency of Christ's peace-making blood to

wash away his guilt, which gave him an humble hope and trust that the Lord had not cast him off forever, but would yet return in mercy to his soul. At this time, he entered into a written covenant with the Lord—1st. That he would never taste spirituous liquors until his dying hour. 2d. That he would prepare a piece for the press, in which he would point out the pernicious consequences of spirituous liquors, and warn the professing world of the danger of touching or concerning with them. 3d. That he would, until his dying hour, observe the same day of the month, as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer before God. 4th. That he would pray in secret three times every day, and examine his heart twice every day before God, whether he had committed any sin, or neglected any duty during the day. 5th. That he would, in the strength of God, try every day, as his daily exercise, to watch and pray, to guard against temptation, and try to maintain a close walk with God. In a few days after, as he was walking along the road, the Lord graciously shined into his soul, and filled him with joy and peace in believing. He felt all his guilt carried away and drowned in the red sea of the blood of Christ, and enjoyed the witness of a sealed pardon in his soul. For many weeks afterwards, he felt a heavenly calm and serenity of soul, and experienced almost an uninterrupted communion with God. He, therefore, again solemnly covenanted with the Lord never to taste, touch or concern with spirituous liquors, and it is his unshaken resolution, by this means, forever to disarm the devil of that source of temptation.

But before I dismiss this particular, I would take notice of a shameful practice that often prevails among men that call themselves men of sobriety and temperance, and to their shame be it spoken, it is sometimes the practice of professors of religion, viz: going into taverns to take a refreshment as they call it. This is, in reality, going upon the Devil's ground, and I apprehend while they are sitting round the grog table, they cannot with a clear conscience before God, pray the sixth petition of the Lord's prayer: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Perhaps four or five neighbors happen to meet at a public place. Custom and friendship incline them to go into the tavern and take a drink together. They are all civil sober men; they call for a room, where they will not be interrupted by the common drinking rabble. One of them calls in his half pint. This goes round, but it is but a taste among so many. The second calls in his half pint; this goes round, but nobody is moved by the liquor. The third calls in his. By the time this goes round, some small effects of the liquor are sensibly felt. But they are a friendly company, and every one must be a good fellow. The fourth must bring in his half pint. By the

time this goes round, they sensibly feel their heads affected, their tongues beginning to falter, and a secret consciousness that they have drunk too much. But the fifth will not sponge upon his friends—he will bear his part; he will be offended if they break up before his half pint comes in: accordingly it is brought in and drunk. And now if they are professors of religion, it is a thousand to one but the Devil and the wicked will have the pleasure of laughing at them.

But I will just suppose another case: A sober, temperate man goes to the court house or country town upon some lawful business—perhaps the merchant that he trades with, presents him with a glass of spirits. Out of politeness, he takes it. He has to walk into the tavern to see some person he has business with. He finds him with others sitting round a table drinking. They present him with the glass, and out of politeness, he receives it. Perhaps he is invited to dine with some respectable acquaintance. Here the bottle and the glass is presented once or twice before dinner. In such cases, if the utmost caution is not used, before he is aware, he will find himself in a bad situation. Again, at marriages, house raisings, log rollings, &c. the bottle is handed round again and again, perhaps not less than twenty times in a day. A sober, temperate man passes it along with the company, and tastes it every time with the greatest moderation. But perhaps the frequent repetition of it, intoxicates him, before he duly considers the consequence. A little taken at one time, and a little at another, perhaps unexpectedly produces the dreadful effect.

The safest plan, then, to avoid intoxication, is never to touch, taste, or concern with it. The man that never tastes it will never be drunk with it.

3rd. It is dangerous for professors of religion ever to taste or concern with spirituous liquors. As long as they taste it, or use it, they are liable to temptation, and liable to disgrace religion. Ardent spirits is a principal bait that the Devil and the wicked throw out to ensnare professors and to draw them into sin. I have heard some wicked ungodly men, so far glorying in their own shame, and owning themselves to be the slaves of the Devil, as to boast how they had taken in such and such professors of religion, and led them on to intoxication, and they tried such another, and with what subtlety and deceit, and with what pretensions to friendship and politeness, they tried to get him to drink; and, if possible, to make him drunk. Here you will find these little petty subalterns of the Devil (though they would wish the world to call them gentlemen) coming to a professor, with the craft and subtlety of their father, the Devil, professing every degree of friendship, and treating him with every degree of pretended politeness. They drink to him again and again,

and urge it, and press it upon him. Perhaps they will bring a different kind of liquor; and here they urge and insist upon him to drink, time after time. Perhaps a more delicious kind of spirits than they have yet tasted, is brought, and this he must taste with them. If they find him off his guard, and beginning to drink it freely, then they hold it to him, and follow him up, until their hellish object is obtained, until intoxication appears visible upon him. Then they rejoice and triumph, and boast with an infernal pleasure, because they have gained a victory over the cause of God, and have brought the religion of Jesus into disgrace. Such persons are exactly described by the prophet Habakkuk, ch. ii. 15 v. "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness."

During the late revival of religion in Kentucky, a certain man who had a short time before, made a profession and joined the church, happened to be at a public gathering, perhaps a marriage: the wicked gathered round him, and persuaded him to drink again and again, until they had made him more than half drunk. Their next object was to get him to dance. In this attempt they were likewise successful. While the poor, unhappy creature was on the floor dancing, one of the profane wretches who had led him into sin, shouted out glory to the Devil, glory to Beelzebub. A person present reproved the profanity of his language. The fellow replied, when these professors of Christianity can draw away one of our class of people after them, when they can get him to profess religion, and proclaim his conversion, they shout and rejoice, and give glory to their God. Now, when we can draw off one of them to join our side, should we not rejoice, and give glory to the Devil. This poor, hardened sinner (perhaps through the influence of whiskey) candidly and honestly spoke out in words, the very language of every wicked sinner's heart upon such an occasion. The carnal mind is so completely at enmity with God, and hates God with such a perfect hatred, that it secretly rejoices, and feels an infernal pleasure at every circumstance in the conduct of professors of religion, that promotes the interest of the Devil's kingdom, and weakens and disgraces the cause of Christ.

But, again, it is extremely dangerous for professors of religion to taste or concern with spirituous liquors. While ever they taste it or make use of it, their characters are in danger, their souls are in danger, and the cause of God is in danger. When the enemies of Christ and his cross present their liquor to them, they watch them with an eagle's eye; they notice exactly how much they pour into the glass, and how often they take it, and how much they drink; and if a professing Christian be in a dead, backsliding state, he may indulge his carnal appetite too

far, though no symptoms of intoxication may appear about him. And, therefore, the wicked will find some ground of reproach, and perhaps some such unfavorable insinuations will be thrown out: Such a man is a professor of religion; I like him; he is none of your stiff, hidebound Christians. He can take a good full glass of whiskey, or he can swallow a good stiff grog. He and I can take a good hearty drink together. And he will be sure to throw out such reflections in the hearing of some exemplary professor, to hurt his feelings. But if the question is proposed, did this professor drink to intemperance? Was he drunk? O no, he will answer, he behaved soberly, but he loves whiskey very well: at any rate he drinks enough for a christian.

Now, were all the professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, forever to refrain from the use of ardent spirits, and never to touch, taste or concern with them more than they would with arsenic, they would forever deprive the Devil of one of the strongest sources of his temptations, and forever disarm the wicked of their heaviest weapons against the religion of Jesus. But, before we dismiss this particular, I shall answer some arguments adduced in our day in favor of this little pleasing indulgence.

1st. Says one, I drink ardent spirits in my family, and with my friends and neighbors when abroad. I love the taste of liquor, and feel a pleasure in the use of it; but I am a sober, temperate man; I do not drink to excess. To this I would answer, every man that drinks ardent spirits, that does not spew, nor vomit, nor lie upon the street, nor falls from his horse, calls himself a temperate man. Many of these temperate men will consume from a pint to a quart of strong spirits in a day. Such temperate men are, in God's account, intemperate drunkards. And though their constitutions are now strong, and they can bear a large quantity of liquor, yet the habit is growing fast, and when the infirmities of old age come on, they will fall a prey to the power of their appetite.

2nd. But says another, I am a laboring man; my calling is painful and laborious, and the frequent use of spirits is very strengthening to me; it creates an appetite for my food, and raises my animal spirits. I find very great refreshment in it. To this I would answer, I make no doubt but your appetite finds very great gratification in it; and, perhaps, if the matter were carefully examined, the pleasure you feel in the taste of the liquor, is the highest principle from which you act in the use of it; and, here, I would request your conscience to answer a few serious questions upon the subject. 1st. Does not your conscience often tell you that your appetite frequently takes the lead of your judgment and conscience? 2nd. Do you not sometimes feel a consciousness that you have drunk too much? 3d. Do you not

often feel a hankering anxiety after spirituous liquors, whether you be engaged in hard labor or in a state of idleness? 4th. Are you not often secretly afraid that some person will discover that you have drunk too much? 5th. Do you not sometimes secretly resolve that you will be more cautious, and use more moderation in your drinking for the future, lest your intemperance should be discovered? 6th. After all this, does not your appetite overcome you, and bring you to break over all your resolutions; and then are you not secretly afraid, lest some person should discover that you have drunk too much? Now, if you are conscious that these things are so, take it for granted that you have acquired that habit that is ripening fast into intemperate drunkenness. Therefore, for God's sake, take the alarm, and stop before it is too late. There is no other way to escape danger and destruction, but to quit the use of it altogether, and never taste it more than you would taste poison of the most fatal quality.

3rd. Another replies, I use spirituous liquors with moderation and temperance. I am conscious before God, that I do use them with temperance. I never felt the evil effects of spirituous liquors to the present moment.

To such, I would answer, if this be the case, I am happy to hear it. It will be well if you can say the same at a dying hour. But still I would tell you that you tread upon dangerous ground. At present you apprehend no danger. This was the case once with hundreds who have since fallen victims to the intoxicating poison. Though you fear no danger now, yet the habit may grow up indiscriminately, and not be sensibly felt for seven years yet to come; and perhaps, when the habit is formed, it may be seven years more before your appetite will gain the full mastery of your reason and conscience; and therefore, it is the safest ground for you to quit the use of it in time—to quit altogether. If you never taste it till your dying hour, the habit will never be formed, and you will never be guilty of intoxication.

But we come to the second thing proposed—which was, to point out *the dreadful consequences attending the use of ardent spirits.*

1st. One horrible consequence attending the use of spirituous liquors, is, that the intemperate use of them degrades and destroys the dignity of human nature, and sinks a man below the character of a beast. What a mournful spectacle! what a pitiable sight is it to see a man of reason and reflection, capable of contemplating the perfections of God, capable of knowing and enjoying happiness in God, lying upon the street or upon the highway, rolling in the mud like a filthy swine, spewing and vomiting like a dog! or to see him coming home to his family, or to his lodging, his garments besmeared with mud and dirt, or

torn off him through logs and brush, where he has blundered along. See him coming into the presence of decent, genteel company. * * * * * * * * * * * * * Hear him talk, and you scarcely discover the rationality of man about him; his tongue runs without end upon the most trifling subjects—pouring out the most disgusting foolishness and fulsome nonsense. When he relates any particular pssage, in a few minutes he forgets that he has told it, and tells it over again, and presently he tells it again, and perhaps he tells it twenty times over before he is done with it, until he tires and sickens every person present with it. When he comes to himself, if he have the feelings of a man, what mortification, shame and sense of disgrace does he feel! what cutting reflections and horrors of conscience! and perhaps, when capable of examining, he finds that his money, his valuable papers, or some useful property is gone, that they are lost, and he knows not how? Perhaps some strolling vagabond found him by the way, and picked his pockets.

The intemperate use of ardent spirits has a natural tendency to sink a man's character into contempt, to destroy his importance, and make him less than a cipher in the world. It leads him into idleness, to gambling, to debauchery, to extravagance, to the neglect of business, and bad management. It has a natural tendency to impair his reason and destroy his intellectual powers. Hence, he becomes stupid, senseless, and almost irrational. When he feels himself sinking into contempt, and in a great measure, neglected by men of character and good conduct —this sinks him in his own estimation. Then he becomes the companion of sots and ruffians and the meaner class of mankind. And, here, he loses all sense of honor, and begins to care but little whether he has a character or not. And the fatal consequence of this is, he gives himself to brutish drunkenness and intemperance, and looks for happinesss and satisfaction no where else but in his bottle. By this means, like a round body, whirling with rapid velocity down a deep descent, he quickly sinks upon a level with the brutes, becomes a disgrace to his friends a nuisance to the world, and dies like a beast, unlamented.

Alas! what melanchely examples of this kind are to be found all over the continent of America! Men of sense and genius that once filled offices of importance with respectability; men that once did honor to their country in legislative and executive departments; men who fought like lions upon the field of battle, in the glorious cause of liberty, and made themselves famous in the esteem of their country; and men who, by prudence and industry for a number of years, had raised themselves to wealth and respectability: I say, of all these classes, we find painful examples of the deadly poisonous effects of the intemperate use of spirituous liquors. Men who might have immortalized their

characters while the world exists, becoming filthy sots; yea. stupid beasts in human shape, and, at last, dying like brutes—their very death a comfort to their friends, and a means of purging the world of its useless lumber.

2nd. Another fearful consequence that attends the intemperate use of ardent spirits, is, that it destroys the peace and happiness of families, and lays a lasting foundation for broils, discords and mischiefs. How must it wound the feelings and destroy the happiness of a woman of a tender, delicate sense of honor, to see her husband sinking his character, and destroying his importance by intoxication—bringing himself and family into disgrace and contempt? How must it distress and grieve a prudent, frugal and industrious woman, who with care and good economy, tries to promote the prosperity of her family, when she sees her husband a slave to his filthy appetite, drunk upon every occasion, and by his attachment to whiskey, neglecting his business, destroying his property, enthralling himself in debt, and bringing ruin and desolation upon himself and family? What frowns, reflections, angry disputes, coolness of affection and unhappy quarrels must arise from such a dreadful service!

But let us pursue the unhappy subject further. Just see a poor filthy drunkard coming home from the taverns, the still-house, the court-house, or the muster field, foaming, full of whiskey inspired with the very temper of hell, raging like an infernal fiend from the bottomless pit. See him mad with every thing, offended with every word that can be spoken to him. See him, like a bloody savage, seizing the companion of his bosom, tearing her by the hair, kicking her, beating her, and abusing her without mercy or the feelings of humanity. When this, and such like conduct, is repeated again and again, what mischief and disturbance must inevitably take place in that family, until it becomes a proper emblem of hell.

3d. Another awful consequence arising from the intemperate use of ardent spirits is, that it is destructive to the health, and often to the lives of those who live in the filthy indulgence of it.

The intemperate use of spirits is calculated to inflame the blood, to weaken the nerves, to destroy the powers of the stomach, and bring on malignant fevers and other dangerous disorders. Again: travelling at night from still-house to still-house, and riding home at night from drinking houses, lying out whole nights upon the cold ground, exposed to the night air, to dews and frosts, destroys the constitution and hastens dissolution.

But, alas, with what spectacles of horror, has spirituous liquors filled the world! How many have fallen from their horses dead drunk, in the cold seasons of the year, and have frozen to death! How many have had their necks broken, or their brains dashed out, by falling from their horses while drunk! How many

by reason of intoxication, have run into dangerous and bloody quarrels, and have been stabbed or beaten to death while drunk! In a word, what multitudes have been hurried to the eternal world by drunkenness in the most dreadful, unprepared state!

4th. Another horrible consequence is, that drunkenness is an inlet to every other species of sin and wickedness. You will scarcely find a drunkard (if he be not so far depraved as to glory in his shame) but will positively lie to conceal his drunkenness. If he be able to keep upon his feet, or to sit upon his horse, he will deny that he is drunk. He will excuse and extenuate his crime by downright lying, and state a variety of other causes upon which he tries to account for every symptom of intoxication that appears about him. Drunkenness opens a wide door for the Devil to set all hellish corruptions and evil propensities of a man's depraved fallen nature into agitation; yea, to bring forth anger, rage, malice, revenge, murder and filthy obscene lusts into operation. When a man is drunk, he is just like a machine in the Devil's hand; he is liable to do any thing that Satan prompts to; he is liable to steal, to rob, to commit acts of uncleanness, or to perpetrate the most horrid murders, rapes, or any thing that the Devil and his own desperately wicked heart inclines him to do. So the habit of drunkenness, when once it is contracted, is always an introduction to a numerous train of other habits of horrible wickedness—such as idleness, gambling, debauchery, quarrelling, fighting, profane swearing, horrid blasphemies, &c.

5th. Another fatal consequence that attends drunkenness, is that it ruins a man's estate, and reduces him and his family to poverty, extreme want and wretchedness. The temperate use of ardent spirits, the year round, is a high tax upon a man's fortune. A man of strict sobriety, once told me that fifty dollars would not pay for the spirits drunk in his family in the course of a year. What, then, must be the annual expenses of a common drunkard for the spirits intemperately used in his house—his tavern expenses, and the expenses of his extravagant drunken frolics? This, no doubt, in the course of a year, will amount to a heavy sum, equal, if not superior to his income. Again: to this add what is lost by gambling; what is lost by idleness and neglect of business; what is lost by his foolish trades and bargains when he is drunk, and the advantages that are taken of him by speculators and designing men when intoxicated. By such a train of expenses and losses, he becomes enthralled in immense debts; his credit sinks and his business falls altogether into disorder; his creditors begin to harass him; one judgment is obtained against him after another; sheriffs and constables from every quarter come in with their executions; his property is seized and sold for almost nothing, and, perhaps, in a few months, he is brought to poverty and extreme want.

Now, whiskey has brought him to rags and wretchedness—yet whiskey is the source of his consolation, and, hence, he drinks on until he becomes a disgrace to humanity, and a nuisance to the society of men, and, perhaps, dies like a brute, unlamented.

6th. The intemperate use of ardent spirits puts a man beyond hope, and for the most part, beyond all possibility of recovery. Let a man once become a habitual drunkard, and his case is nearly, if not entirely, hopeless. You may convince his judgment that he is wrong, and that his present course will ruin him in time and through eternity. You may touch his conscience with a sense of his guilt, and he will candidly and honestly acknowledge the baseness of his conduct, and lament his dismal situation with floods of tears. He will make an hundred promises that he will change his conduct; that he will never do as he has done, and that he will drink no more. But let the bottle be presented to him the next hour—his resolutions are all gone; his appetite has effectually gained the mastery over his judgment, his reason and his conscience. So we commonly find the drunkard spending his life in a reciprocal course of sinning and repenting, and repenting and sinning, often making solemn resolutions to amend his conduct, and as often breaking these resolutions as he can get whiskey.

When a man becomes a habitual drunkard, he appears to be within a step of losing his day of grace, and sealing his damnation. He may have solemn calls from God to repent and fly from the wrath to come; he may feel the motions of the divine Spirit, and be the subject of the most awful awakenings; but as soon as he comes to the tavern, to the still house, or into a company of drunkards, he begins to dabble with the temptation, and presently he is ensnared. The Devil sends some of his old companions to lead him on by degrees, until they have him drunk, and so we commonly hear no more of his convictions or serious impressions about religion, but now he turns like the dog to his vomit, or the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

I have in the course of my life, seen three considerable revivals of religion, during which I have had the opportunity of conversing with a great many persons under solemn awakenings, and of knowing their exercises particularly; and I have made this observation—that I scarcely know any that came under the description of habitual drunkards, (however hopeful their convictions might appear for a time) that ever embraced true religion,—and if any of that character did profess to experience religion, they were no honor to the cause of Christ but a burden to the church; as they would be frequently dabbling with the Devil's bait, and as frequently drunk.

7th. The most dreadful consequence that attends the sin of drunkenness is, that it ends in hell, and there effectually plunges the immortal soul into eternal perdition. Says the prophet, Isa. 5th. chapter 11th verse, "Woe unto them that rise early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, that continue until night, till wine inflame them." In the 14th verse, he describes their fearful doom: "Therefore, hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure, and therefore their glory, and their multitude and their pomp; and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it." The Spirit of God, by the Apostle, expressly declares, in 1 Cor. vi. 10, That drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God—and again, he ranks drunkenness among the works of the devil. But when we consider that drunkenness inspires the unhappy subjects of it, with the spirit, the temper and disposition of hell, it then naturally follows, in the reason and fitness of things, that hell is their most proper and suitable place.

Just observe their conduct upon a public day, at a court, an election, or a general muster. Go into a tavern and see the common hall filled with creatures in the shape and likeness of men, but inspired with the temper of devils: see them swallowing down the intoxicating poison; hear their horrid oaths and blasphemies, the very language of the infernal gulf belching from their mouths.—Hear their confused noise, their tumult and distraction, and their appearance much more resembles a band of devils from the bottomless pit, than a company of rational, intelligent men.

Just go to the muster field or a general review—see several hundred men upon parade—their sobriety, their attention to orders and decent conduct through every part of the military exercises of the day, seem to do honor to their country. You would rejoice to see so large a company of rational, respectable citizens. But wait until they are dismissed and receive their officers. Alas, what a melancholy change takes place! You will see a large majority of the same men turned into an appearance resembling perfect brutes or devils. Hear the sound of wild confusion raised, worse than a Bedlam. See the mad commotion and tumult that takes place round the whiskey barrel—the yells and shrieks, the horrid oaths and hellish blasphemies, as though a company of demons had come up from hell. Presently, when the whiskey begins to operate—when they begin to feel its intoxicating power, the very spirit and temper of hell begins to appear. Now bloody quarrels begin in every part of the vast multitude: see men tearing off their clothes—seizing each other like dogs—tearing each other by the hair—beating and abusing one another—biting each other's flesh—gouging out one another's eyes with the madness and fury of devils.

Presently, you will see a number of these poor bacchanalians reeling and staggering about, their eyes swelled and blackened, their blood streaming, bearing visible marks of inhuman abuse, others you will see hanging upon a fence, or leaning upon a wall spewing out their vomit like dogs; others again you will find, like filthy swine, lying in corners, stretched upon the street, or wallowing in the mud and dirt; and again, when they disperse, and attempt to go home, see them in companies upon every road, and in every direction—what loud talk, distracted noise, horrid oaths, and fearful blasphemies fill the very air as they pass along? See them straining their horses to the gallop, yelling and shrieking like infernal fiends—perhaps some dashed from their horses, either killed outright, or their bodies bruised and their limbs broken—some falling off, and lying all night by the high-way, liable to be trodden to death by horses, or torn to pieces by wild beasts.

Now let reason and divine revelation speak and determine what place, in all the vast extended universe, is most fit, proper and suitable for such a class or description of men—Certainly the place that is most suitable to their temper and disposition—and that is hell.

Let creatures of such a disposition be taken into the pure mansions of the blessed in heaven, they would have no more relish for the pure spiritual joys of the New Jerusalem, than a hog inured to the puddle, and raised by the pot-ail trough, would have for the grandeur and delicious accomodations of a palace. Yea, take such monsters, in fact half brutes half devils, into heaven; the company, the exercises and employments of the place, would be so contrary to the vitiated taste of their filthy natures, that it would be more intolerable to them than hell. Yea, rather than spend an eternity in a place so contrary to their temper and disposition, they would fly from the presence of God, and leap over the walls of heaven and hide themselves in the bottomless pit of hell.

From what has been said respecting the dreadful consequences attending the use of ardent spirits, we may see some of the difficulties that attend the road to hell. We may see at once how large a sacrifice the drunkard has to make in order to accomplish his own damnation.

1st. He has to part with his character, his dignity and importance as a man. He must degrade himself below the character of a beast, and sink himself into the utmost contempt and disgrace.

2nd. He must part with the happiness, the peace, and comfort of his family; he must live in a state of enmity, hatred and disturbance even with the companion of his bosom, and reduce his house to a perfect emblem of hell.

3rd. He must part with his health, and lay himself liable to all the noxious disorders and diseases arising from intemperance; yea, he must lay himself liable to be frozen to death, to be killed by a fall from his horse, and to all the fatal accidents peculiar to a habit of drunkenness.

4th. He must part with his estate, his money and property, and sink himself and his family into poverty, want and extreme wretchedness.

5th. He must endure the most fearful horrors of conscience, the most keen, cutting reflections of his own mind, the most mortifying sense of the shame, disgrace and contempt to which he has reduced himself, and sometimes fearful apprehensions of future misery and torment, equal to a hell upon earth.

In a word, for the gratification of this filthy appetite, he must part with all that is comfortable and desirable in this life, and the life to come. He must resist the Holy Ghost, murder conscience, fight against the light of conviction, and force his way into hell in spite of all his tender feeling, honor, interest, family comfort, reason, conscience, divine revelation, and the tears, prayers, entreaties, warnings, reproofs and admonitions of friends, relations and the ministers and people of God.

8th. The last dreadful consequence we shall mention is, that the use of spirituous liquors often brings reproach and disgrace upon the religion of Jesus, and opens the mouths of the uncircumcised in heart to blaspheme.

One principal objection which deists and men of depraved morals, raise against the religion of Jesus, is, the untender walk and ungodly conduct of its professors: and the two principal crimes that they bring forward as a reproach to professors, are, 1st. Their hardness and tightness in their dealings, and the unjust advantages that some take in bargains; and, 2d. The intemperate use of spirituous liquors. By these two things, I make no doubt but professors of religion have thrown stumbling blocks in the way of sinners, that have proved the means of prejudicing them against the ways of God, to the sealing of their damnation.

Our present business is to consider the last of these, viz: the disgrace that intemperance brings upon Christianity. And, here, we would observe, that wicked and ungodly men suppose that God's people should be perfect creatures; and so far they are right—for the law of God requires them to be such; and the mark which the gospel of Christ requires us to aim at, is perfection; and, indeed, perfection is the very heaven the real Christian desires to obtain. Then, when the infidel or profane sinner sees the professor of religion in the tavern or at the still house, drinking with the wicked, swallowing down one full glass of stiff grog after another; or when he discovers his tongue

hobbling, his face inflamed, and his eyes red; or when he sees him catching at the wall, or holding by the door-post, when he goes out; or staggering from side to side in his walk, his course resembling the worm of a fence—at once the sinner marks him down for a hypocrite. And hence, upon all occasions, such flouts as these are thrown out: Such a man is a great professor; or, perhaps, he is an elder of the church; he prays in his family, night and morning; he sits down at the communion table; he makes a great ado about religion, but he is a rotten hypocrite; he has just about as much religion as I have myself; he can take as stiff a grog as I can; yes, such a day I saw him at ——'s right drunk; at any rate he could not talk plain, nor walk straight—and I call that drunk. What is he an elder? In fact, if he is, he is a wet one. Was he not at the communion table such a Sabbath? O shocking! such a communicant! Alas! have not the wicked very often sufficient grounds for such cutting remarks? How does such conduct in professors stab the church of Christ to the life! How does it open the mouths of the uncircumcised in heart to blaspheme the precious name of Jesus!

When the Lord Jesus Christ had but twelve followers, one of them was a devil, a Judas, a traitor. So in every age of the church until the present day—there are tares among the wheat, wolves in sheep's clothing, that wish to mingle with Christ's sheep, Judases among the true disciples; persons that have by some means got a standing in the church, but are still stabbing and wounding the cause of God, by gratifying their filthy appetites. But still they call themselves temperate men, and wish the world to think they are Christians. In their own apprehension, they are never drunk, inasmuch as they do not spew, nor vomit, nor fall from their horses, nor lie upon the high way. Professing Christians, such as are Christians in reality, are often hurt by seeing them tippling in the taverns, and at public gatherings, house raisings log rollings, &c. making too free a use of the bottle, and shewing some symptoms of having drank too much? On all such occasions, the wicked are watching them with an eagle's eye. And hence, the report is always on the wing among the ungodly. Such a professor was three sheets to the wind; such a one drinks hard for a Christian; I dout understand these drunken Christians, &c.

Now, I would appeal to the consciences of these drinking professors! If they are not conscious themselves at such times, that they have taken too much liquor? if they are not secretly afraid that some person will suspect that they have drunk too much? if they are not, at these times, at great pains to walk straight and upright, and to place their words in proper order, lest they should be suspected to have drunk too much? But if a fellow professor suspects it, and feels hurt upon the occasion,

and in the spirit and temper of Christ, goes to one, and tells him in such language as this: My friend, you drink too free; your conduct is a reproach to the cause of God—you will find him pointedly denying it, and bringing forward a hundred other causes and reasons, upon which he tries to account for every symptom of intoxication that appears about him. If you complain to the church, and he be cited to appear before the church or session, what rancor, malice, and resentment does he manifest against his accuser! How often do such ideas as these flow from his heart, and in words fall from his tongue—He is a trifling little fellow—He is always taking more upon him than becomes him—It would be well that he would mind himself—If he would look at home he would find as much in his own conduct to pick at, as he does in mine. When the business comes to trial, how will he try to conceal his guilt, by feigned excuses, equivocations and downright lies and falsehoods! If the fact is proven, and the minister and session deals honestly with him, presently he is offended with the church, disgusted with the minister, and mad with the session. It is a pity, indeed, that the conduct of such persons should be a reproach to the religion of Jesus, when the very reason and procuring cause of their conduct is the total want of religion, if the example of Jesus Christ and his apostles, tolerated or encouraged tippling, intemperance or intoxication, or cheating and defrauding, then infidels would be more justifiable in their scoffs and reproaches at Christianity. But when we consider that the precepts of the gospel requires the purest, strictest morality, and the most holy, heavenly obedience to every command of the law of God, and that the life and example of its divine author was spotless holiness, and untainted purity, then the base conduct of professors of religion, upon the principles of Justice, ought to be no reproach to the religion of Jesus—but to themselves alone.

But the wounds that religion receives from persons of the foregoing description, are small, and scarcely discernable, when compared with the falls and blunders of real experimental christians, who have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus, by the eye of faith, and have felt the love of Christ that passes knowledge, shed abroad in their hearts.

To see a man that has made a shining profession before the world, that has stood like a tall cedar in the garden of God, for a number of years, that has appeared for a long time to bring forth fruit to the glory of God—one that, as an elder of the church, has been an example of piety, a guide to the youth and inexperienced; or a minister of the gospel, who has been a burning shining light, an instrument in the conversion of sinners, the spiritual father of many souls—to see such a one drunk with the intoxicating cup, degrading his heaven-born character to a

level with the swinnish sinner—alas, how deep the wound! How does Zion bleed and weep, and hang her fainting head while the wicked rejoice, devils exult, and all the dark vaults of hell resound with shouts of triumph. From such mournful considerations, let all the friends of Jesus that feel his cause as dear to them as their own souls,, be entreated never to taste or concern with the intoxicating fluid. As long as they never taste it, they will never be intoxicated, nor wound nor dishonor religion by it. But we shall conclude the subject with the following exhortation.

AN ADDRESSE TO THE FOLLOWERS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

*My dear Christian Friends and Brethren:—*You profess to have deserted the Devil's camp, and to have enlisted yourselves under the banner of King Jesus. You have often expressed in words, your blessed hopes of eternal life. You have declared, by your conduct, every time that you have sat down at the Lord's table, that you have felt the pangs of the new birth, that you have entered into Christ's family, through the strait gate of a saving conversion, that you have, by faith beheld the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus, and that you have received the spirit of adoption in your hearts, whereby you are enabled to cry Abba Father. You have often professed to have felt the witness of the word and spirit of a God of truth, bearing witness with your spirits that you are the children of God.

If these things be so, you are, in truth, the followers of Christ; and if you be Christians indeed, and not formal hypocrites, then I am sure your daily exercise and employment will be to mortify the deeds of the body, to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts, to deny yourselves, to take up your cross and follow Christ. It will be to cut off your right hand sins, and to pluck out your right eye sins, to lay aside every weight, and the sins that easily beset you, and to run with patience the race that is set before you.

Now, if you have these evidences of a progressive work of sanctification going on in your souls, I am sure that you are particularly attentive to that solemn admonition of your divine Lord, viz. *Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation*—Luke, xxii ch. 46 ver. That you are particularly attentive to that important direction of the Divine Spirit, 1 Thes. v. chap. 22 ver. To abstain from all appearance of evil.

My Christian friends, if these things be so, I apprehend you will attend to the advice of a friend that feels himself unworthy to be called a brother, and who, if he ever enters the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem, will feel himself the greatest wonder of sovereign grace. But, as I wish the prosperity of Zion, and Christ's bleeding cause, to rise triumphant over all the bloody stabs that she has received from her professed friends, I

would pray you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to pause, to reflect, and consider the wounds, the reproaches and deadly stabs that the church of Christ has received just by the use of spirituous liquors. I would ask you, before God, would it not be an unspeakable advantage to the church of God, and a source of comfort to every individual professor of religion, that loves the Lord Jesus Christ in truth and sincerity, if Christ's professed followers would just disarm the Devil of one of his heaviest weapons against the cause of God, and deprive him of one of his principal sources of temptation, by which he destroys the souls of men, and disgraces the religion of the blessed Jesus; and that, my Christian friends, you can do, by refraining, and forever avoiding the use of ardent spirits. If you never taste, touch or concern with them in any place, in any company, or upon any occasion whatsoever, you will never be intoxicated—you will never be ensnared by that temptation. Spirituous liquors, then, will never be the cause of bringing you to dishonor God, to defile your consciences, and disgrace the religion of Jesus.

As long as the professors of religion continue to dabble with this bait of the Devil, they are ever in danger of swallowing his hook.

They may plead for the moderate, temperate use of it, and as we have already observed, in the moderate, temperate use of it, acquire a habit that will not be easily eradicated; and, therefore, at some unguarded moment, when danger is least expected, when they are off their guard, when the Devil finds them negligent in the exercise of watching and prayer, they may fall an early prey to this infernal snare. Then how will the wicked rejoice and triumph with all the infernal pleasure of their father, the Devil! With what hellish delight and satisfaction, will they try to degrade and reproach the religion of the blessed Jesus; and, had they but power equal to the malignity of their hearts, they would totally banish it from the world.

Again let me entreat you, as you profess to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and would abstain from all appearance of evil to avoid going into taverns and still-houses, and tippling shops, as you would avoid the broad road to hell. By venturing into such places, and touching, tasting, or concerning with the intoxicating poison is just to venture upon the Devil's ground, and to go into the way of temptation. Whenever the Devil finds you there, he has his eye upon you, and is sure to set his trap for you, and he has often his deputies and little petty demons in human shape, to present you with the bait. If ever a soldier wanders off from the camp and entrenchments of his prince or general, and is found trifling within the enemy's lines, he is sure to fall into the enemy's hands. So if the best Christian upon

earth ventures upon the Devil's ground, he is sure to find the Devil too hard for him.

Again: wherever you are, in whatever company, if whiskey is in circulation, danger is near, and very often the Devil is near. Perhaps you may reply to this observation, with the boldness of a self-confident Peter, that you apprehend no danger—you are a sober, temperate man—you can take a moderate refreshment; but the Devil and the wicked cannot take you in. I would answer you in the words of the blessed Jesus—Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation; Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. Suppose you have lived in the temperate use of ardent spirits for half a century, and have never been overtaken or ensnared by it, it was the goodness of God, and nothing good in you, that has preserved you so long from falling; for while you use it, or concern with it, you are playing with a viper, and taking fire in your bosom.

If the Devil is near, and danger near, in every company where whiskey is freely used, and we are sure that it is the Devil's bait, the subtle snare into which thousands and millions have fallen, and have been irrevocably lost, to what danger, then, are poor, feeble, imperfect mortals exposed, as long as they taste or concern with it. The Devil's snare is laid for them in every direction. If they are called to a court of justice, at a public time, there is whiskey upon every side; and friends and neighbors, and sometimes some of Satan's deputies, inviting them and pressing upon them to drink. If they attend the duties of the musterfield, where custom has made it necessary for the commanding officers to give a treat sufficient to make every man drunk, or else they lose their popularity; and here there is danger. If they go to assist their neighbor to husk his corn, to reap down his grain, to raise his house, or to roll his logs, none of these things can be done without whiskey, and here, if they taste it, they are in danger.

Again, there are many of the men of the world so depraved and wicked, (as I have heard themselves boasting and vaunting,) that they will try to ensnare and take in a professor of religion, if they find he will drink with them. Hence they will bring their liquor to him, again and again, and entreat him to drink; and here they will try to grace every part of their conduct with kindness, friendship or politeness, when, perhaps, like the Old Serpent, their object is merely to ensnare him and draw him into sin; and, it may be, if they cannot lead him on to intoxication, yet if he keep tasting it with them, it is a thousand to one but they will stab his character, and stab the religion of Jesus

through him, with dark hints and insinuations, that he loves whiskey too well, and that he drinks hard to be a Christian.*

Now, my dear Christian friends, if the prayer of your hearts is the sixth petition of the Lord's prayer—*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*; it is the desire of your hearts to abstain from all appearance of evil; if you wish to glorify God with your bodies and spirits, which are his, then bid an eternal adieu to the intoxicating poison—shun it, and avoid it, as you would the poison of a serpent; then the Devil and the wicked will never be able to ensnare you by it, to reproach you, or to stab the cause of God, through you, upon that score. By so doing, you will reduce the Devil and his children to the necessity of trying some new project, in order to draw you into sin.

But are there any of the professing followers of the Lord Jesus Christ that keep distilleries, and for the gain of this present world, manufacture the rich blessings that fall from the bountiful hand of God, into spirituous liquors, to the advancement of the Devil's kingdom, the destruction of men's souls and the disgrace of Christianity? Is it not the case that the corn, the rye and the wheat, which God, in his infinite goodness, has bestowed upon the world as the staff of life, and the fruit of the orchard, which he has given for man's comfort and support, are taken by distillers and manufactured into a poison destructive to the souls and bodies, characters and estates of the poor human race?

The ancient Mythologists tell us about the Cyclops, beings of a monstrous description, whose business it was to forge thunderbolts for Jupiter. But how much more horrible may the description of the distillers be, when their employment is, in fact, to forge bolts of destruction, instruments of eternal death for the Devil, by which he carries thousands and millions of poor, lost sinners to the dark regions of hell! and by which he ensnares and leads astray, hundreds of professing Christians into acts of sin, to the dishonor of religion and the hardening of the wicked.

Is it possible that a lover of Jesus, that prefers the welfare of Zion above the salvation of his own soul, can be a distiller? Can he, for a little worldly gain, furnish the Devil's kingdom with snares, traps, immortal poison and daggers to stab immortal souls to the life?

* This observation is by no means intended as a reproach upon every man that presents spirituous liquors to his friend and neighbor that calls at his house, or comes on a friendly visit. I have known hundreds of respectable men and Christians, who, I have reason to believe, never presented any liquor to any man, at home or abroad, but from a true principle of friendship and politeness; and, therefore, I hope no gentleman, who is conscious of the purity of his principles, will feel himself hurt by the observation. But, as I have heard some persons boasting how they ensnared professors under pretensions of friendship and politeness, it is, therefore, such as feel a consciousness of guilt upon the subject, that I wish to feel the stroke.

But the professing distiller will reply: I keep a distillery; but I do it with a good conscience; I am a temperate man; I never get drunk; I suffer no drinking company about my house; I make whiskey for the market; I barrel it up, and carry it to the merchant. By my distillery I turn my produce into money, and by that means I can help my family.

To this I would answer, in the time of the late Indian war, a blacksmith might have kept all his hands in his shop, making rifles, tomahawks and scalping knives, and by that means, have supplied the savages with instruments of death, to murder men and innocent women and children. When called to an account, he could make the same reply, viz. My business is very profitable; by this means I can raise money to help my family; and, although I make instruments of death for the savages, to enable them to murder my fellow creatures, yet I murder nobody myself, neither do I suffer human blood to be shed about my house. Would such an excuse stand in the view of the government? Would not the United States punish him as a common enemy to his country? The application is easy—Christ and the Devil have been at open war for nearly six thousand years, and this war will continue to the end of the world. Then shall the soldiers of King Jesus, who have received his bounty money in the day of their conversion, when they enlisted under his royal banner, they that are clothed in his regimentals, and rejoice in his final victory over sin, Satan, death and hell—shall they furnish the common enemy, with instruments of eternal death, to strengthen the Devil's interest, and weaken Christ's cause and kingdom, without acting a traitor's part? It is impossible!

Again, my Christian friends, I once more entreat you, in the bowels of Jesus, to renounce the intoxicating cup, and forever deprive the Devil of that source of temptation. To be drinking with the wicked in the taverns and still-houses, or to have the smallest marks of intoxication visible upon you, is to degrade your heavenly birth, to sink religion into contempt, and to bring back an evil report of the land of promise. By such conduct, you proclaim to the world this horrid declaration. The beauty that shines in the white and ruddy, fair and lovely face of Jesus, we have seen, but he is not that precious, altogether lovely Saviour that we have often proclaimed him to be. The joys of pardoned sin, and a sense of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, we have felt, but the Devil and the world can give more lasting, solid pleasure. Our heavenly inheritance by faith we have seen, but it is so barren, so poor and scanty, that we must apply to the Devil and the ungodly to mix us a bowl of pleasure in order to make our happiness complete. O! consider how you dishonor God, crucify the Lord of glory, and make his wounds to bleed afresh; yea, how you fill the infernal vaults of hell with

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shouts of triumph. For the Lord's sake, watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. Consider how strait and narrow the way to heaven is. If you are Christians indeed; if you have left all for Christ; if you have sold all to gain the pearl of unspeakable price, you must walk the narrow way. What says the Divine Spirit upon the subject? Why, let all that name the name of Jesus, depart from iniquity; and says our blessed Lord except a man deny himself and take up his cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple. If your right hand offend you, cut off. If your right eye offend you, pluck it out. The law of God, and the gospel of Christ require you to live so near to God, and to maintain so close a walk with him, that you should keep consciences void of offence towards God and man—that whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, you should do it to the glory of God. I would then conclude in the words of the inspired apostle, 2 Pet. iii. chap. 11 ver.—If these things are so, what manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness?

Presented to Mrs. France
as a gift of a friend and
representative of the children

of the New York State



